

INSIDE

Your quality Australian weekly soccer paper for the new millennium

SOCER

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OLYROOS AND FINALS ON COLLISION COURSE



King
Kres
is
back!

Details
inside

By Greg Blake

Perth Glory boss, Bernd Stange, has got every right to question Soccer Australia on just how seriously the governing body actually takes its own major domestic competition.

Fair enough, the Olyroos are desperately in need of as many tune-ups as they can get in the lead-up to Sydney 2000, but to schedule a four-nation friendly tournament in late May into early June - at the precise time that the NSL finals are in full swing - is...well, let's just hope it's an oversight.

Stange, who would likely lose Kasey Wehrman for about the 400th time this season on international duty during the proposed series, nailed it in 'Inside Soccer' last week.

"Can you imagine an international tournament in England being planned during the FA Cup Final and the top players not taking part in that showpiece decider?" he exclaimed.

"It's the same thing."

My jolly word it is; only for us the play-offs are for the whole box and dice.»

So while everyone else is actually getting revved up for what should be a ripper finals series and huge box-office, Soc Aus puts another bullet in the foot by ripping the guts out of a couple of teams and diminishing the appeal of the NSL series by running some pretty damn critical international games at the same time.

It's not the first or presumably last time this type of scenario has occurred, although on most occasions we haven't been guilty of the questionable scheduling.

If it's any compensation to Stange, the good sides usually still soldier on through.

After losing three of the previous four grand finals the Melbourne Knights again headed the ladder at the end of 1994/95, only to learn that they would lose Mark Viduka to the Aussie team heading out the '95 World Youth Championships in Qatar.

With the Knights within a game of being knocked out of the series Viduka managed a flight home on the eve of the preliminary final, and in one of the most dramatic finals of the modern era, the big 'V-Bomber' notched a hat-trick to edge South Melbourne 3-2 in that game before going on to take the national crown for the first time.

Friday night's cancelled Newcastle versus Power game has provoked anger from Breakers officials about the decision making process that led to the game being called off by the referee 40 minutes before kick-off, after it was initially given the go-ahead earlier in the day, writes Aidan Ormond.

"We fully agree that players' safety is of prime concern," said Breakers GM Morris McAlister, "but we had many fans from country areas bused in as part of an expected crowd of 5,000 plus. We were told the game was on. If SA will compensate us then good, if not, we will seek legal recourse for lost revenue. It was a disaster," he lamented.

The fact that the two decisions were made by different people (a local inspector first then the ref later) and there was no rain in the intervening time, makes this decision even more perplexing.

The club has agreed to look at improved drainage for Breakers Stadium next season.

Mark Robertson

Wolves' Olyroo chats about his UK experiences and Ian Wright.

Ivan Zelic

A model NSL player?

NSL All-Stars

We pick the best for March 2000.

Young Socceroos

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Crooky



Rarely in football is the selection of Man of the Match greeted with complete agreement by everyone in the team but that happened last Friday night when Matt Bingley was awarded it after our 3-0 win over the Knights.

'Bingers' was fantastic.

He started the game at sweeper but he switched regularly with Robbie Enes, who played as a central midfielder.

Every time 'Bingers' went forward he was dangerous and he was rewarded with a goal in the 82nd minute that made it 3-0 and started a party at North Sydney Oval.

He was also instrumental in the second goal when he hit an instinctive left foot shot that Knights goalkeeper Martin John could only parry into the path of Ryan Griffiths, who slotted the ball home nicely.

As well as his goalmouth heroics, 'Bingers' was rock solid in defence and constantly averted danger by reading the play beautifully as the last line.

In a nutshell his performance was faultless and there were no dramas when it was announced he had been named Man of the Match.

Although 'Bingers' was head and shoulders above the rest it didn't mean the rest of the side was mediocre, with Michael Cunico next in line when handing out applause.

'Coons' played as a central defender along with Phil Moss, in the absence of Mark Rudan and Paul Bilokapic, and did very well.

We have always rated 'Coons' as a defender at Northern Spirit and it is just

another string to his bow on top of his midfield ability. At 21 years of age he is maturing into a fine NSL player.

Another youngster to return to top form was Matty Langdon. 'Langers' started the ball rolling with a thumping free kick just before half time that rocketed into the top left hand corner from 20m.

It was his fourth goal of the season and his first ever NSL goal with his favoured left foot. But, it was more his general play that had a smile on everyone's face. He was back to his best on the left, whipping in crosses with sting and venom.

Ryan Griffiths also stamped himself as a player of the future by scoring his second goal in three games, once again as a second half substitute. It won't be long before we unleash him for the full 90 minutes.

After the game Arnie was rapt with the commitment of the players, not just for the game against Melbourne Knights but over the past six weeks and I have to agree with him.

While desperately trying to stay in the race for the top six and even after dropping out of contention the players have not dropped their guard and must be congratulated.

This weekend we take on Adelaide Force in Adelaide before we travel up the Pacific Highway to play Canberra Cosmos at North Power Stadium (Grahame Park) on Easter Saturday (April 22).

Ian Crook

Northern Spirit and England

Soccer kids invade MCG

Soccer will take over Melbourne's sporting icon, the MCG, on Tuesday April 18, and it's FREE! In a display of Victorian soccer unity, the VSF and the four Victorian NSL clubs are combining forces for the good of the game, to run the second annual Crazy John's Soccer Superclinic for boys and girls between the ages of 5-10.

All participants will have the opportunity to learn soccer skills from their favourite NSL stars

and an experienced team of VSF coaches, as well as receive a complimentary Crazy John's showbag. Last year 600 children enjoyed the event at Olympic Park, but this school holidays, 1000 are expected at the "The People's Ground".

It begins at 11am and finishes at 1pm. Entry is through Gate 14 at light tower 6, and parking is available in Yarra Park (enter via Gate 3). For info contact Neil Wallace at info@soccervictoria.org.au/www.soccervictoria.org.au/ph: 03 9682 9666/fax: 03 9682 9777

S-news

Inside Soccer's Australian news and gossip

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I never cease to be staggered, writes Greg Blake, by the telephone numbers offered to players or coaches by otherwise poverty stricken clubs in their seemingly never-ending quest to go even deeper into debt. Had a chance conversation with one coach around the traps, whose star is currently on the rise and who tells me he was offered a not so plumb Sydney NSL job not so very long back. No prizes for guessing which. I've known the bloke a fair time so I have no doubt he was straight up, but the amount he was offered to make the move could have tempted Sir Alex Ferguson. Well, perhaps not, but while I don't have an accountancy degree I genuinely struggle to comprehend how clubs, which are to all intents and purposes crippled financially, can produce such huge bucks to finance a team while all else around them crumbles. The phrase 'salary cap' generally seems to rankle with soccer people, yet I've no doubt that some form of enforced fiscal restraint and responsibility is necessary if any more than about a half dozen current NSL teams are to survive and thrive in the long term.

BERND STANGE TO STAY FOR THREE-YEARS?

Sources in WA say that this week's Glory board meeting will ratify a three-year deal for coach Bernd Stange. Also Halpin and Despotovski have been offered three-year deals. And Subiaco Oval - an all-seater of about 40,000 with its excellent surface - looks likely as the finals venue for Glory.

EXPERIENCED LINE-UP

Winton Rufer, John Lammers and Fred de Jong starting for the Kingz? That's a combined age of 109 years! Match report on page 11. And another experienced player, Breakers keeper Bob Catlin, is expecting a third child with wife Jane. Congrats Bob.

VSF RACIAL CODE

The VSF has introduced a Racial and Religious Vilification Code in support of the Commonwealth Government's Living in Harmony Initiative, which aims to promote community harmony. A key objective of the code is to promote FIFA's guiding principle of 'fair play' to provide a welcoming environment for everyone to enjoy their participation in the sport.

STYLE STAKES

Bradford City aren't just in the Premiership relegation zone, but near the bottom of the league too when it comes to style, according to a survey says Super Soccer magazine's Mark Fowler. So who would come out on top of the style stakes in the NSL? Surely Marconi would be close to the top. When they step off the coach it's like a Milan fashion parade! Would you expect anything less from an Eddie Krnecovic-coached side? Speaking of stylish, Matildas Amy Taylor is reportedly on the shopping list of US Playboy.

LET'S GO SHOPPING

It's that time of the year when coaches submit their shopping list to their presidents. One player on a number of these lists is Ivo de Jesus, who is reportedly on Carlton and a number of Sydney clubs' wish lists.

Meanwhile, reports have surfaced of a possible investment by Glasgow Rangers in Northern Spirit. It's all talk at this point, with plenty to work out, but watch this space for further developments.

THE OLDIES

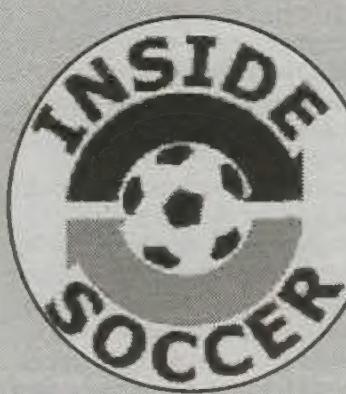
After playing against his former club, Gippsland Falcons, and having a reasonable game, the Kingz' Lev Osman thought he had a good chance of playing at home to Marconi last Friday. Given this, it was perfect timing to bring mum and dad over from Melbourne to show them around his adopted city, do the touristy thing, then see their son play in the crucial game. The oldies had a fine old time until news came through that their boy was dropped. A snub was in the air but the chairman rang them and offered ma and pa Osman seats in the corporate boxes. The last we knew they were considering the offer.

CHANNEL 31 FOR SOCCER

Perth's Community television broadcasters are to air a weekly soccer segment with a focus on the W.A. State League over the winter. The show, which debuted last week, will go out as part of the Hellenic Hour every Wednesday from 7.30pm and features news, views and interviews on the game at state level. Hosted by Perth soccer identity Paul Tombides, the segment will run for 10-15 minutes each week. The program is the station's third regular soccer segment. The British Soccer Show is aired on Thursday nights from 8.00pm, and there's a regularly segment on Friday Night Live just before 8.00pm which discusses the N.S.L. and features studio interviews with personalities from Perth Glory.

MICHAEL HUDEC: REMEMBER HIM?

If you were in Canberra a few years ago you might, writes Nick Guoth. At the beginning 98-99 season, Rale Basic brought in some overseas trial players for Cosmos. Included was Michael Hudec from Slovakia with credentials of having played for Lokomotiva Kosice. Hudec arrived in August 98 and showed that he did have some talent. He was involved in some training trial games against local league teams before starting against the Spirit in a friendly. He lasted 34 minutes before he succumbed to a knee injury, which was to sideline him for the rest of the time. Other weird complaints arose with Hudec and he never made it onto the field for any real games, even though he was registered. Then on December 4, 1998 Hudec did a runner. He took a flight back to Slovakia without telling anyone. His holiday was over in Australia and the farce of his lack of appearance could now be forgotten. Or could it? Hudec still owed money to the Cosmos for a number of items. When he finally surfaced some months later asking for a clearance, this was denied until the money was to be paid. Finally, sixteen months later, the Cosmos have been paid and an ITC has been provided so that he can continue to play and the sad and sorry tale of Michael Hudec can be forgotten.



INSIDE SOCCER

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Dances with Wolves?

By Greg Blake

Scary isn't it? Who'd have thought it, but all of a sudden Wollongong-mania is sweeping the nation.

To avoid any 'kit for comment' scandals, I'm even on the bandwagon since club GM, Graeme Haney, sent me a replica Wolves top.

"I like Wollongong - yeah, I think they'll win it," says currently injured South Melbourne dynamo Andy Vlahos.

"Wollongong is the best team in it," declared Gippsland skipper and NSL veteran, Mehmed Durakovic.

"They way they just keep coming at you, it's awesome."

"I can't see how anyone will stop them."

The once resident least-fashionable club in the nation is now consensus favorite to go all the way for the first time in club history - although it must be said that the bookies still fancy Perth and some quiet money has been plonked on 'Smooth' Eddie's quietly achieving Stallions of recent times.

But the industry insiders are all jumping aboard this rather remarkable team which we once dismissed as a rather pleasant diversion from the genuine heavyweight NSL division, expected to contain South Melbourne, Parramatta, Northern Spirit and Perth.

"In my eyes Wollongong is the best team in it," said Vlado Vanis, coach of a Knights team which had been statistically the most successful team of the new year

until the Wolves literally breezed past them at Knights Stadium nine days ago.

The blossoming profile is not something coveted by coach Nick Theodorakopoulos, who knocked back the lure of the Sydney Olympic job two years back in the hope that he could finish a job he started mid-way through the 1995/96 season.

But while his team is grabbing a profile the south coast faithful could have only had erotic dreams about as little as 18 months ago, Nick T would be happy if everyone would just shut up about the Wolves in the run-in to the finals.

"I'm quite happy if people still don't take us seriously," says the league's longest-serving single club coach currently going around. "I'm quite happy if teams still wish to underestimate us."

The footballing world has tilted slightly on its axis with the impending demise of Adelaide City Force.

Bleat as the club die-hards might at the prospect, I don't believe Zoran Matic's team will make the cut at the business end of the season.

And despite spending the best part of the last ten years wishing they'd give someone else a chance at playing finals footy, well, something just won't seem quite right without 'em.

It was something we could rely on - like death, taxes and mum's Sunday roast.

But I reckon they'll be back a damned sight sooner than expected.

What I perceived might be a fairly

long and painful rebuilding process for the Force might yet prove to be a mere one-season hiccup.

At least from what I've seen of the ol' Zebs during their recent hot streak.

With the benefit of what has been a particularly long NSL season Matic has had some bonus time in which to hasten the transitional period, turning a team which won just one of its first eleven starts this summer into a genuine contender in 1999/2000.

The run from dead-last into a place just off top six pace since late December hasn't been vintage Adelaide City, but they've done enough to suggest that they'd scare the life out of the other finalists if they fell over the line.

And here's a shock; despite the pre-season loss of premier Aussie goalkeeper Jason Petkovic and the early season retirement of veteran Socceroo Milan Ivanovic - both significant absentees - the Zebs are still the number one ranked defensive unit in the NSL.

Some things just don't change.

Including the ding-bats who persist in saying that Matic has had his day, that the game has passed him by.

The 1999/2000 season might not be recalled as his greatest triumph, but Matic has produced what appears to be the embryo of another fine team despite the most hectic close-season Adelaide has endured during his long tenure at the club.

Out in pre-season went the likes of Brad Armour, Mark Yates, Dino Mennillo, David Terminello, Travis Dodd, Petkovic



Wolves Nick Theodorakopoulos: happy not to be taken seriously.

and, eventually, Ivanovic.

Getting Aurelio Vidmar back was a huge bonus, as was the introduction of Claudio Pelosi.

Vidmar's seen his best footy and at thirty-something Pelosi is not long term, but the addition of several impressive rookies - Matthew Kemp has caught the eye during City's red-hot spell - and the continued improvement of the likes of Louis Brain and Nicky Sabljak suggests this team is one for the future, not destined for the dump.

Aside from the Kingz and desperate Sydney United, Adelaide City has bled more NSL first-gamers this season (9) than any of the other clubs going around.

And I dare say more than 'steady as she goes' Matic has had to harvest in a single season of football more than ever before.

That he's taken them this far already is testimony to his oft-debated coaching prowess and an ominous sign that far from calling it quits as a league power, the Force might be just on a very brief vacation.

We Want You!

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Friday 14 April "The Powerhouse"

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GREG BLAKE
C7 SOCCER COMMENTATOR

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On very, very rare occasions it is probably fortunate that our code doesn't receive the ridiculous and totally disproportionate media attention lavished on the other footy codes; Aussie rules, rugby league and union.

With the intrusive media focus firmly on every element of the on and off-field actions of senior footballers seemingly 24 hours each day, very little of what they do escapes public scrutiny.

Although historically his is not by any means an isolated case, one youngish current day NSL star with a professional career beckoning is exceptionally fortu-

nate to have escaped any adverse publicity in recent times as he persists in flying way too close to the sun.

Thankfully he's got some good mates at his club too, who so far have managed to keep the kid out of serious harm's way.

But here's a very public warning to the player - and you gotta hope that he knows who he is - the stories, be they accurate or embellished, of substance abuse problems and possible police charges over two separate and possibly serious incidents are starting to filter out and into the wrong hands.

The integrity of this devoted footy publication should be judged questionable if we pursued the story and I would breach my own personal ethics if I crossed the line.

You won't read it here.

The kid's a talent, for sure. But as I understand it, unless he pulls his head in very smartly he might as well bend over and kiss his professional career goodbye.

Given Zoran Matic's apparent indifference to record chasing - witness his heartfelt scowl of disapproval at the media attention surrounding goal king Damian Mori's chase for glory last month - I suspect he won't be compelled to coach again next year on the basis that he himself is on the cusp of hall of fame territory.

But then again, Matic has threatened to give the caper away since Duran Duran last had a number one and, when he did eventually give it away at the end of the 1994/95 season, his 'retirement' lasted precisely one year.

Already a record three-time grand final-winning coach and boasting the most games by any coach at a single club (336 at the Force, going into last weekend), Matic is a mere six career coaching victories away from breaking Frank Arok's all-time NSL record of 177 career victories, achieved from 439

games coached.

Matic-led teams have now won 172 of his 391 games at the helm going into round 29, last weekend.

South Melbourne GM, Damien Phillips, tried to rip a couple of media people some new and creative orifices for being mis-quoted on the issue of South Melbourne's recruiting or otherwise for next season.

I was on his hit-list after Phillips was recently quoted as suggesting that his club was both actively scouting out-of-contract players for next season, as well as offering several of its own for auction or otherwise to talent hounds from other NSL clubs.

Phillips, having apparently been duly tried and exonerated by an Ange Postecoglou-led lynch mob, told me that nothing could be further from the truth.

He's a decent bloke - that and the fact that he's about seven-foot tall - so I believe him. Unfortunately, big fella, that isn't exactly what some of the big-money men around the traps at the Bob Jane are saying in the wake of this season's inglorious slump.

Way I heard it is that several senior players' heads are on the chopping block and that there will be some chunky cheques doing the talking in the off-season.

The blokes I'm talking about have been known to get their own way. And I quote: "This is not bloody good enough. The very least expected at this club is to make the finals every season."

The above, however, is all rather removed from the more personal side of footy, which I honestly reckon that all of us tend to forget more often than not.

I like Ange Postecoglou a lot.

Not all the blah, blah about respecting his ability or his coaching stats or the two championships; the profession aside, he is genuinely just a friendly, decent, personable man.

And while I probably promised him not to quote him on this issue, it must be said that I believe he's hurting pretty badly at the moment.

Not at the results, or missing the finals, or coping it from the media, or the speculation over his position (the current rumour is Postecoglou out - Alan Davidson in); those things come with the territory and Postecoglou is big enough to wear it all.

No whining or bleating from this fella.

And I won't break a promise and quote him, but to hear Postecoglou suggest that the greatest lesson he has learned from this forgettable sea-



Peter Beardsley (and his son): One in a long line of British guest players who have made a handy earner from the NSL

son is that club loyalty ultimately counts for very little is a sad indictment on how savage this game can be.

Postecoglou loves South Melbourne, everything about it; the culture, the history, the heritage, the successes and enduring through the hard times.

Part of his coaching ethic has been to instill in his players the same pride in and passion for the club which has carried him through the best part of two decades around the place.

He's played a key role as player, captain, assistant coach and senior coach at the club and been involved in every single one of the club's national titles.

Postecoglou defines club loyalty.

He wasn't the best player the club has ever seen and, who knows, maybe he can't coach at all and he just got lucky.

That's not the point.

What he has done at South Melbourne has been motivated by his devotion, passion and commitment to the club.

Every single man, woman and child who feels the same owes Postecoglou all the respect that they can muster.

End of story.

Just another word on the issue of whether there is any genuine value to the league or the NSL clubs who would still persist in digging up the corpses of former high-profile world stars and propping their remains up on the paddock for a couple of token senior 'guest' games, as the Melbourne Knights did recently with Peter Beardsley.

Beardsley's first game for the Knights drew a ground record 11,000-plus to Knights Stadium, although it must be said that the match was a local derby against South Melbourne and what is already a big box office match-up offered the added lure of virtual elimination final status for both teams.

His second game drew a modestly over-the-odds 5,000 or so for the visit of Perth Glory.

No team plays better footy than Wollongong these days, yet in the Knights' first home game, sans Beardsley, it was back to the regulation 3,500 or so hardy Knights devotees through the gates despite a potentially wonderful game on offer.

Nothing changed except Beardsley's bank balance.

For the \$40,000 or so it cost the club the Knights could have produced much the same result at the turnstiles if they'd paid an extra 8,000 people five bucks each to come to a game or two.

Free money will do it every time.



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Valsport signs with NSW Fed

By Aidan Ormond

As David Magroane, Valsport MD puts it, "we are over the moon being involved with the NSW Soccer Federation. They are leading the way in Australian soccer and together with Valsport, it's a great soccer combination."

One of the oldest and premium brands of Italian football - Valsport - has joined forces with the NSW Soccer Federation to become the official clothing supplier to NSW State teams.

Valsport was founded in 1920 and

has specialised in football (soccer) equipment and clothing for eighty years.

"We're delighted to come under the Valsport label," said NSW Soccer Federation President, Peter Gray.

"They are a high quality brand who has served the Italian football community for many years and they know the requirements of outfitting a football team inside out. We have eight State teams and they require a lot of gear!" said Mr Gray.

The new NSW State strip will be unveiled for the first time at the various national championships to take place on the Sunshine Coast, in Newcastle and at

NSW's own Valentine Sports Park in July this year.

Headquartered in Padua, Italy, Valsport was founded by Antonio Valle and has been associated with players such as Fabio Capello, Gigi Riva, Billy Costacurta and Roberto Di Matteo as well as the world-famous Juventus club.

Valsport is making its first venture into the Australian soccer clothing market by its association with the large NSW Federation.

"We hope that we can help Valsport's business, as much as they will help our State teams look the part on and off the

pitch," said Mr Gray.

"Valsport has a vision," added Magroane. "That vision is to be the number one soccer brand in Australia in the next five to ten years. The NSW Federation is so strong at grass-roots level, and this suits Valsport, because our brand is for the elite levels as well as the grass-roots amateur players."

Valsport's clothing will be launched in about a month and will be accessible through their retail outlets and head office.

The NSW Soccer Federation also enjoys the support of Sapphire Technologies, a leading information technology recruitment firm, as sponsor of the State teams.

In other news, NSW Soccer Federation is holding its first annual Golf Day on Wednesday 24 May at St Michael's Golf Course, Maroubra.

The format will be a 'shotgun start' commencing at 8.30am. The cost, including green fees, motorised cart, snack on arrival, morning tea and a BBQ lunch including liquid refreshments, is \$90 per person.

Expect to see Socceroo coaches Farina and Arnold, who are known to fancy themselves on a golf course.

However, they're expected to be strongly challenged by several Super League players, particularly a large contingent from Eastern Suburbs Wanderers led by striker Jim Aschner.

The Golf Day is open to players, fans and business supporters of the NSW Super League. For further inquiries, e-mail the NSW Fed at info@soccernsw.com.au or phone 9629 1800.

The King and I

The 'King' Kresimir Marusic is back in Sydney! And that's got to be good for the city's football aficionados - particularly those from Sydney Olympic - who have him in their side for the remainder of the season on-loan from Belgian strugglers Lommel.

Marusic, is a talisman for NSL success having played in four finals series and three grand finals, again teams up with Branko Culina, who coached him during Sydney United's 1996/97 'Jogo bonito' season.

Since leaving Northern Spirit in the off-season it has not been a happy time for the skilful and game-turning attacking midfielder.

He wanted to leave Lommel almost as soon as he arrived, he then was red-carded twice, but worst of all, the club -

which averaged only about 5,000 fans - had the stench of death about it.

"What I cannot accept," said Marusic at his Sydney hotel, "is players and a coach who accept defeat. If they lost they just shrugged their shoulders. How can you play in a team like that?" he asked.

During his spell in Belgium a Chinese agent offered him a contract in China. Marusic went there, did the requisite fitness tests, and is now waiting to see, yet the Chinese lifestyle did not impress.

Lommel will have to transfer him outright if Marusic is to leave the club as he has a contract for two more years. He still wants to play in Europe but, as he said, "it's good to be back in Sydney."

An uncertain future? Perhaps - par-



'King' Kresimir at his Sydney hotel after arriving from Europe.

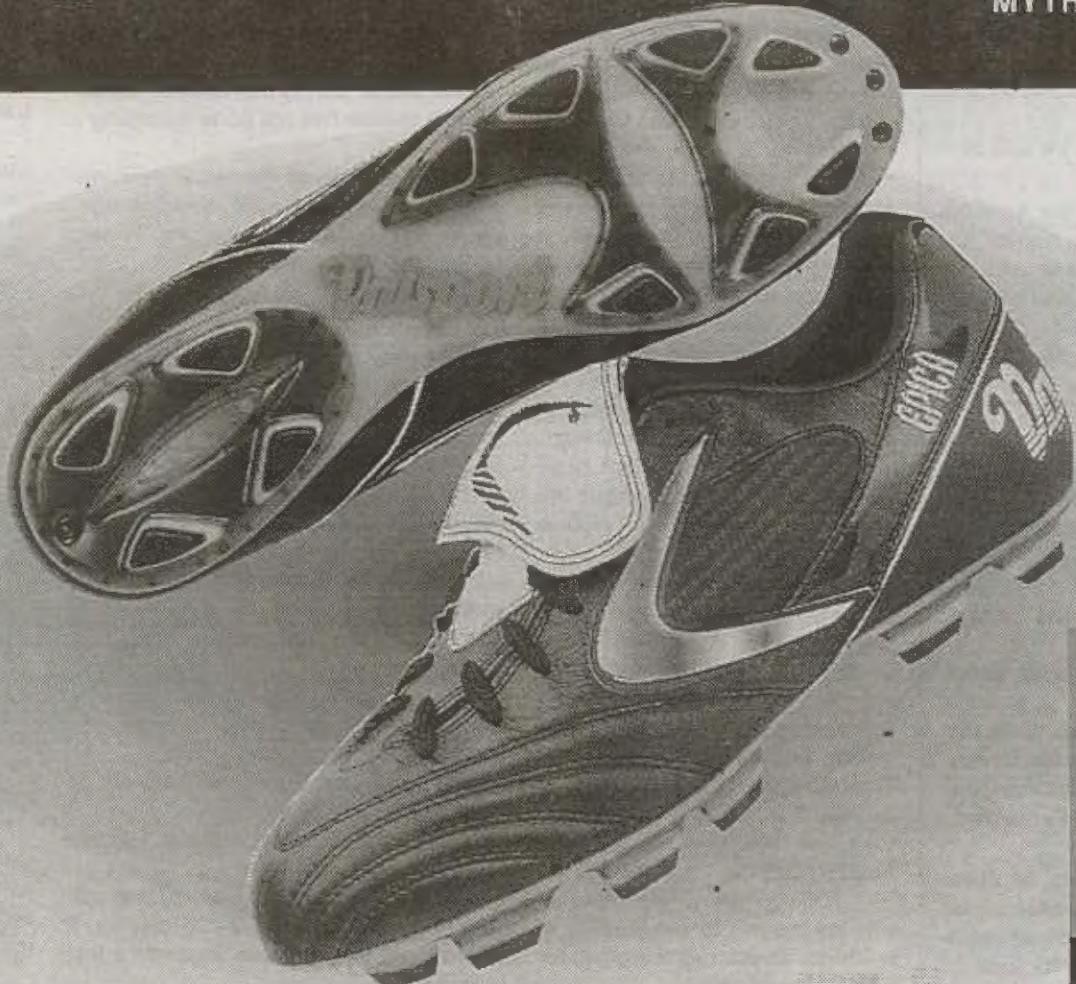
ticularly if Lommel is relegated - but one thing is for sure, Olympic will have a player ready to fill that playmaker role Chi Chi Mendez had to vacate.

Full interview with 'King' Kresimir Marusic coming soon to Inside Soccer.

Aidan Ormond

Valsport

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Olyroo Mark Robertson

By Roger Sleeman

For Mark Robertson, 1997 was his year. WYC in Malaysia playing for his beloved Young Socceroos and Nottingham Forest then manager, Dave Bassett, inviting him to the City Ground for trials. It must have seemed like a dream come true.

Robertson's development had hardly been surprising considering the pedigree he had inherited from his father Alex, the former Dundee, Dunfermline and Sydney City central defender.

During 1997/98, under the influence



England star Chris Waddle: Robertson's first manager at Burnley

of former England star Chris Waddle, the manager of Burnley in the Nationwide second division, Robertson believed he had a big opportunity to advance to higher levels of English football.

Quotes of the week

"If I thought we dominated the second half territorially. Yet if you want points for how you look out there you might as well do synchronized swimming. In the end you've got to put it in the back of the net."

Graeme Plath (Tuggeranong coach) following his team's 5-2 loss to Monaro in the ACT league.

"I write poetry."

Force's Olyroo Ivan Zelic when asked by Daniela Raco if he had any hidden talents. Zelic is in the running for the Cleo Bachelor of the Year award, to be held this Friday in Sydney. Go Ivan!

"It might be all over for me and Shane at the end of the season."

Wynton Rufer being brutally honest about his future with the Kingz.

"I want to buy your fans, you have the best bloody fans in the country. I want to buy them for the Warriors. The Kingz let in a goal and your bloody fans get noisier. Fantastic"

A NZ league fan on the Kingz.

"... a captivating cornucopia of style and substance, of passion and panache, of skill and subtlety, liberally lavished with copious quantities of free-flowing football ... professional football in Oceania at its very best."

Inside Soccer's Jeremy Ruane on the Kingz v Stallions. Apparently it was a cracking game.



'Gonged but not forgotten!



England star Ian Wright: Robertson's teammate at Burnley

However, since those heady days, Mark Robertson has experienced the highs and lows of professional football and with a change in management, Robertson has been out of favour in recent times at Turf Moor.

In early March, he became so disgruntled that he decided to return to Australia for the rest of the season to play on loan with Wollongong and resurrect his claim for a place in the Olyroos.

In this interview with Roger Sleeman, Mark Robertson discusses life at Burnley, his quest for Olympic selection and his plans for the future.

ROGER SLEEMAN: Is it a strange feeling playing in the NSL again after three seasons in England?

MARK ROBERTSON: When you're used to playing as a full-timer it takes some adjustment to play in a league in which only a few of the clubs are full-time. Fortunately, in my first game against Marconi there was a good crowd at Brandon Park and in some ways it was similar to the atmosphere which I've experienced at Burnley.

One thing which stood out in that game was the much slower pace of Australian football and although I was given the job of tracking Brad Maloney in that match, I felt plenty in reserve despite not playing for a month.

R.S. Dave Bassett showed a great interest in you during the 1997 WYC but you failed to pick up a contract at Nottingham Forest. Can you explain what happened?

M.R. I trialled at the City Ground for nearly four weeks and played a few reserve games before Bassett informed me he couldn't offer me terms.

I believed my performances at the club were creditable but not knowing the circumstances of the dealings between my agent and the club I can't really account for Bassett's change of opinion about my ability.

R.S. After you left Notts Forest, you went to Glasgow Rangers for a week and caught the attention of Walter Smith. Did Marconi act unfairly in insisting you come back to Australia before you had a chance to really impress at Ibrox Park?

M.R. Walter Smith wanted me to stay in Glasgow for a month so I could be properly assessed but Marconi wanted me back in Australia for pre-season training.

At the time I felt hard done by because if I could've made the grade at Rangers, my future would've been assured.

Ironically, it was on the way to Heathrow, that my agent suggested a trial at Burnley where Chris Waddle was the manager.

With a legend like Waddle as manager, it didn't take much convincing and after a few weeks at Turf Moor, I was transferred to Burnley F.C. on a two-year contract for the princely sum of AU\$170,000.

R.S. While Chris Waddle was the magnet to join Burnley, in hindsight do you regret signing for a division two club?

M.R. I knew a lot about Waddle so I had great confidence he would take me under his wing. Of course it wasn't the Premier

League, but I saw it as a start and a stepping-stone to better things.

I must have made some impression because earlier this season Crewe Alexandra wanted to buy me.

Unfortunately Stan Turner, the current manager, wouldn't let me go despite the Crewe offer of 500,000 pounds.

R.S. What was the first season at Burnley like under Chris Waddle?

M.R. Waddle had this aura about him, which only great footballers possess and I learned things that were foreign to the Australian coaching setup.

I also received great assistance from Waddle's assistant Glen Rhoda, one of Glenn Hoddle's assistants for England at the time and Gordan Cowans, the former Aston Villa great who was the reserve team manager.

When you're surrounded by people of this calibre you have to improve but it still took me half a season to adjust to the pace of English football. You never get more than three touches on the ball in contrast to the Australian game where time on the ball seems unlimited.

In that first season I played almost half of my games in the reserves but once I'd settled down I became a fixture in the first team squad and appeared nearly twenty times either in the starting lineup or as a substitute.

Unfortunately the club finished fifth from bottom in that 1997/98 campaign and Chris Waddle was forced to resign at the start of the next season.

He was replaced by Stan Turner who had occupied various roles at Chelsea, Sunderland, Crystal Palace and Hull City.

R.S. Can you relate your experiences under Stan Turner?

M.R. Turner cleaned out all the players from the regular first team except for striker Andy Paton and myself. I was a regular starter during the 1998/99 season but this season has not gone according to plan.

At the end of the season Turner offered me a three-year contract but I decided to sign for only one year to keep my options open.

Until my return to Australia I'd only made four first team appearances this season and I was pretty disappointed when the club didn't accept the Crewe offer.

Colin Todd, the former Bolton manager and now a freelance talent scout came to see me play in the reserves. However, because they're playing me as a striker, which isn't my position, he didn't really see the best of me.

I had to get out of Burnley for the rest of the season and the only consolation was that Turner allowed me to play on loan at Wollongong.

R.S. Can you understand Turner's treatment of you?

M.R. He repeatedly claimed that with such a strong squad of 24-26 players, it was difficult to guarantee anybody a first team spot.

When I discussed a move from the club he said I was one of the young players who were a big part of the club's plans and if we were promoted to division one,



His enthusiasm is infectious, particularly on the training pitch where he really brings out the best in players.

R.S. Realistically what are your chances of making Sydney, 2000?

M.R. I've spoken to Raul Blanco who was concerned about my lack of first team football so now I'm back at Wollongong he'll have a good chance to have a look at me for the rest of the NSL season.

If I can produce it out on the pitch, who knows what can happen.

I believe I can add something extra to the squad but in the end it's Raul Blanco's call.

Techno Prisoners

Glory duo's battle for Young Socceroo spots

By Aidan Ormond

Five days housed at NSW's Parklea complex, under the strict regime of Les Scheinflug, is hard yakka for any teenage footballer. Luckily two Glory players at last week's Young Socceroo camp, Ljubo Milicevic and Ivan Ergic, not only had each other for moral support but their favourite techno music to keep them relaxed.

"Yeah, we both like the same music," said Ergic over lunch, "we're like brothers, we've been best mates since the AIS but maybe my tastes are more hard-core techno than Ljubo's. I'd like one day to maybe get a turntable."

Ergic lists DJ as his favoured profession if he wasn't a footballer. DJ Ergo perhaps?

However, judging by recent Glory performances Ergic does not have to worry about a second career. Club coach Bernd Stange said recently: "I can't teach him (Ergic) anything." The popular Glory coach also likened Ergic to some of his other protégées, such as Ulf Kirsten and Mattias Sammer.

It's a big wrap indeed, but Ergic, a down-to-earth 19-year-old, is not letting it get to his head.

"I heard about it and it makes you feel great but I'm not perfect and there are areas I have to improve, like my heading and my left foot," he said.

The 193cm 19-year-old defender Milicevic echoes such sentiments. "You can never be perfect with both feet so you want to be able to train as hard as you can so when you arrive in Europe you feel as confident on the ball as possible."

Last week's Young Socceroo camp - which featured such names as Tancheski and Owens from Breakers, Vasilevski from Carlton, although possible captain Mark Byrnes was trialling with Bayern Munich - is the first step on the road to the 2001 championships. "The camp's been good. The group has some real skilful players plus there are those who will come back from overseas who were part of the Joeys' World Cup Final side," Ergic noted.

Insiders say Ergic has looked a class above during the practice games and training.

"Everyone is trying not to make mistakes and of course are on their best behaviour because they all want to be in the squad ... 'The Boss' (Les Scheinflug) has his expectations of you both on and off the park."

"Everyone just tries to do his job but it is hard when we don't know each other. Of course there are a few AIS boys here so there is that link," they said.

There is another Young Socceroo camp in July, presumably with the new coach at the helm. Given that it is immediately after this season's NSL, speculation is rife that the coach will come from the ranks of the national competition (see contenders' box.)

"Because we were living together at the AIS no matter what we could have a laugh together and so when we played we enjoyed it so much, especially with the quality of coaches we had, but Canberra itself I don't miss it," said Milicevic of the title-winning years at the national sports institute.

However things haven't been totally smooth for Milicevic since he has moved to Perth. He was criticized in the Perth press for having a 'bad attitude', after local club Western Knights released him

from duties (all Glory players have a local side to play in when the Glory don't require them.)

Milicevic explained, "I got injured in my second game, I iced it and left early. Four days later Knights sent a letter to Glory releasing me from his commitment. They didn't speak to me and of course the papers ran the story with their side of it. Basically they made up these generalizations about me; anyone who knows me will tell you that it isn't true. The other players couldn't believe it."

"I felt they (the club) should have spoken to me first and had a chat."

Ergic is with Swan IC although he has not played with them.

On a happier note, the issue of playing for Australia is, well, not an issue for Ergic who only arrived here three years ago from the Balkans (he was born in Sibenik.)

"My family sort of knew the Balkans war was going to start so that's why we came to Australia, even though I didn't

Young Socceroo Coaching Contenders

- 1: Ange Postecoglou
- 2: Branko Culina
- 3: Eddie Krnecic
- 4: Lee Sterrey
- 5: Steve O'Connor
- 6: Ernie Merrick
- 7: Nick Theodorakopoulos
- 8: Dave Mitchell

know anything about the country.

"I said to my dad 'there's no soccer in Australia', but in fact that's not true. I'm really happy here, the club is fantastic and at the AIS I had much better facilities to develop and learn from."

"Who knows, maybe coming here has meant I have a better chance of making it in Europe," reasoned Ergic.

"Yeah, I agree," said Milicevic. "In the Balkans it can be very corrupt," he said. "You have to know people, have money."

Milicevic trained for five months with

the Hajduk Split youth team earlier this season.

"What you'll find," Ergic said of the Balkans' venal soccer scene "is worse players than you will be selected to play for clubs. Here if it's the talent and hunger you've got then you are at least given a chance."

And for those who may think that Ergic's national team allegiances may lie elsewhere, think again. He's sold on the Green and Gold.

"At the AIS they gave me everything ... Australia has given me everything so I can't just go and play for another country, that would not be right even though I was not born here."

"I've made friends here at the AIS then to go and play against them for another country, well, it's wrong," he said in an accent broadly Australian.

Fine sentiments indeed for a player who is obviously grateful and smart enough to realize that Australian soccer can offer plenty for an ambitious and talented youngster.

"I'm originally from WA, my parents have a house there so coming back home was great for me. Plus Perth Glory, with its crowds and the set-up is so professional, so I always wanted to play for them," said Ergic.

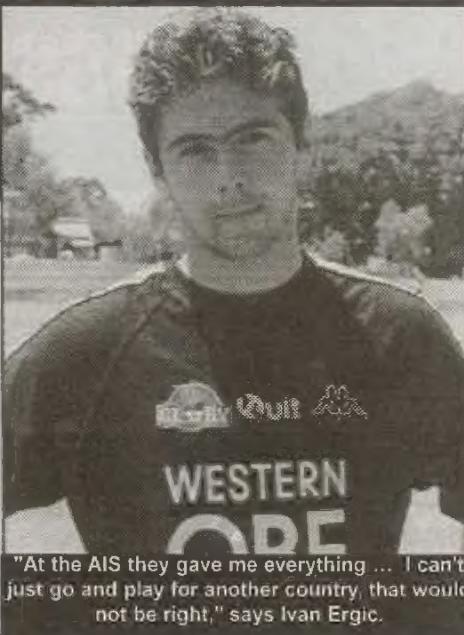
"The team tends to get fired up and stuck in the lead-up to a game, so yeah training can be tough," said Milicevic of the famously intense Stange-run sessions.

"It's a bit more physical and of course it's quicker," added Ergic of the transition from NYL to NSL.

And with Glory's unrivalled media presence, this has meant that these two teenagers have been in the Perth public eye. "I don't remember thinking 'this is great' but it feels good when kids keep coming up to you wanting your autographs," said Milicevic.

"You have to try make everyone happy," added Ergic of his newly-found social responsibility.

"If you have kids wanting your autograph you try to sign them all, but sometimes it is difficult when you are in a hurry to get away to eat or you are tired after training," chimed in Milicevic.



"At the AIS they gave me everything ... I can't just go and play for another country, that would not be right," says Ivan Ergic.

They both agree that the vibe on match day is pretty special.

• "It's class ... it's pretty much like Europe," noted Ergic.

"There are no easy games in this finals, and possibly grand final, finish."

Ergic and Milicevic have as their favoured choice of overseas destinations, Serie A, Bundesliga or the Spanish Primera. However, such a move is unlikely to happen, in the short-term at least.

Both want to stay in Australia for another season. A smart move for Ergic who will be able to garner more pro-footy experience before leaving as a free agent, thus gaining a bigger slice of the action for himself. But for him, it's not all about money.

"In my opinion," he explained "a lot of young players go overseas too young. It's important to have your family around you to give you support. You have to be mentally tough to play overseas."

"Harry Kewell is such an unbelievable player but maybe when he was younger it was tough for him. Who knows, he may have wanted to quit when he first went over, you don't know," questioned Ergic.

As they leave, it occurred to me that these two mates - with their football and techno music - will probably stay friends for the rest of their lives.

It will be fascinating to see how their - and this group of U/20s' - careers develop.

The proud tradition of the Young Socceroos is in good hands.

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AUSSIES on the world stage

A round-up of how our Aussies players fared abroad this last week ...

Kev Muscat: England's most hated footballer?

In the Nationwide Division One Birmingham City's Martin Grainger has launched an attack on Wolves' Socceroo defender Kevin Muscat. Grainger spoke out following Birmingham's highly-charged 1-0 win over Wolves at St Andrews last Saturday.

He accused the Australian of trying to stamp on him and also making a high challenge on international team-mate Stan Lazaridis which left stud marks on his chest. Birmingham's Martin O'Connor was sent off for lashing out at Muscat.

"He is probably the most hated man in football," said midfielder Grainger.

In the weekend game Muscat played a full game and scored a 40th minute penalty which was restulted from one his crosses as Wolverhampton beat Blackburn 2-1 at home.

Midweek European games brought fluctuating fortunes for the two Aussies left in the latter stages of Europe's glittering showpieces, the Champions Cup and the UEFA Cup.

Mark Bosnich reigned in Spain for the second time in two weeks to provide Manchester United with a golden opportunity of reaching the Champions' League semi-finals.

A fortnight ago he thwarted Valencia almost single-handed to help ensure United qualified for the quarter-finals as one of the top seeds.

In the Bernabeu he produced an even finer performance with a string of saves as United drew 0-0 with Real Madrid.

In the UEFA Cup, Leeds travelled to Turkey to face Galatasaray in the first leg of the semi final. The death of two Leeds fans before the game seemed to affect the visitors and although Kewell had an opportunity when he glanced a Stephen McPhail cross agonisingly wide of the left-hand post, neither he nor the team performed to their recent exploits and went down 2-0.

In the English Premier League, Mark Schwarzer had a superb midweek game for Middlesbrough as they had an upset 2-3 away win over Tottenham. The Aussie

'keeper played the full game and brought off a string of good saves.

In the weekend Premier League action Richard Johnson was in action for Watford as they hung onto a 0-0 home draw with Derby. Johnson played the full game and had an opportunity to put the home team in front but the shot from inside the box didn't trouble the 'keeper.

Kewell was also in action on the weekend as Leeds strived to maintain their challenge for second spot behind short priced championship favourites Manchester United.

With second spot guaranteed automatic entry into next year's Champions Cup Leeds surrendered their position when they lost 1-0 away to Aston Villa.

Kewell played a full game and had a couple of chances to score and although he, and the team, played better than in their previous few games they suffered their fifth defeat in a row.

The two Aussie 'keepers in the Premier League, Schwarzer and Mark Bosnich played against each other when Middlesbrough hosted Manchester United in the Monday night game.

In the mid-week games in Nationwide first division, Jason Van Blerk played a full game as West Bromwich Albion played a 1-1 home draw with Ipswich to hover just above the relegation zone.

Van Blerk again played a full game on the weekend as West Brom had another draw, 2-2 away to Barnsley.

Danny Tiatto was replaced in the 73rd minute but as Manchester City had a 2-0 home win over Bolton mid week in front of 32,970 delirious fans.

It was a satisfactory few days for City, as they thrashed Crewe Alexandra 4-0 on the weekend with Tiatto getting a full game as the home team protected their automatic promotion second position in front of another 32 thousand plus crowd.

Jason Kearton was in goals for Crewe who lost their third game in row and are in danger of relegation.

In other weekend games Craig Foster played 90 mins as Crystal Palace had a 3-3 home draw with Stockport while fellow Aussie Nick Rizzo wasn't part of the home

team's squad.

Lazaridis also played a full game as Birmingham drew 0-0 away to Huddersfield to maintain their one place and two point advantage over the vanquished team in fifth spot.

In Portsmouth's 2-1 home win over Norwich Aussie Mike Panopoulos remained on the bench for the duration of the game whilst George Kulscar came on in the 79th minute in QPR's 2-1 home win over Swindon. Frank Talia was in goals for Swindon who are in last spot and on the way to the second division.

Shaun Murphy was in the Sheffield United back four for the full ninety minutes as they drew 0-0 at home to Grimsby.

In the Nationwide Second Division Millwall had a resounding 3-0 win over Bury to remain in contention for second position. Tim Cahill played the full game while Lucas Neill made his return from injury as an 83rd minute substitute. Millwall are in fourth spot three points behind second placed Wigan and still in contention for the automatic promotion second position.

In the Scottish Premier League a prolific scoring season for Mark Viduka has reached a dry spell with the 'Big V' scoreless during the week. He played in Celtic's 4-0 win over Motherwell but was replaced in the 80th minute and was left out of the squad when Celtic visited and was beaten 1-0 by Hearts.

In another midweek game Rangers, minus both of their injured Aussies, Craig Moore and Tony Vidmar, had a 3-0 win over Dundee United.

On the weekend in the Scottish Cup semi-final Rangers had a huge 7-0 win over Ayr but again without the Aussie contingent.

In the German Bundesliga Ned Zelic was impressive as sweeper although he was mostly seen as a play maker in the central midfield in the second half as 1860 Munchen drew 1-1 away to SpVgg Unterhaching.



Kevin Muscat: is he the most hated footballer in England?

The home team took the lead and even though they were reduced to nine men towards the end they looked as if they would hang on. But Paul Agostino, who came in 52nd minute, spoiled the party as he equalized with a header from short distance in the last minute.

The unlucky Frank Juric remains on the sidelines as Bayer Leverkusen beat Borussia Dortmund 3-1 while Joe Simunic was similarly indisposed as he slowly returns from another injury but his team, Hertha Berlin had a win over Eintracht Frankfurt 1-0.

In Holland Zeljko Kalac's patriotism has put his spot with Roda JC in danger as his defiance to play for Australia against the Czech Republic did not go down too well with his coach.

Kalac was dropped for the game prior to the international and has not returned in two subsequent games, including the weekend's 0-0 draw with NEC.

In Croatia, Ante Milicic finally won a starting spot with Rijeka, they played a 1-1 away draw with Cibalia but the former Young Socceroo was replaced in the 75th minute.

In Serie A Paul Okon was again on the bench as Fiorentina drew 1-1 away to AC Milan.

Aussies in Asia: S-league and Malaysia

By Scott O'Donnell in Singapore

Aussie coach Alan Vest's Geylang Eagles well and truly had their wings clipped in their top of the table clash with SAFFC, going down 3-0. Geylang had a great chance to take the lead in the opening five minutes however, Englishman Billy Bone had his penalty attempt saved by SAFFC's National Team keeper, Rezal Hassan.

After that, it was all SAFFC for the rest of the half, scoring two goals and unlucky not to have scored a couple more.

The second half saw a more committed Geylang side but they were unable to break down the SAFFC defence.

Brian Bothwell was heavily marked and his chances were limited. His best opportunity came in the 75th minute, but his header went just wide.

Last year's Golden Boot winner, Mirko Grabovacs tormented the Geylang defence and was rewarded with a great individual goal in the dying minutes of the game.

This result means that SAFFC remain undefeated at the top of the table, with Tanjong Pagar second, and Geylang slipping to third position.

Daren Stewart's Balestier Central finally picked up their first point of the season with their 1-1 draw with fellow cellar-dwellers Clementi Khalsa.

Last round winners, Marine Castle went into their game against defending champions Home United, with former Olyroo, Michael Garcia who was down with the flu, starting on the bench.

Home United, who are still without former Socceroo Ernie Tapai, cruised to a 4-0 victory.

Tony Carbone played for Marine Castle, and Garcia came off the bench, but United were far too strong.

Mirko Jurilj's Sembawang Rangers, who are still looking for their first win of the season, went down 2-1 to Tampines Rovers.

In other results, Tanjong Pagar defeated Gombak United 4-2, while Jurong score a 1-0 away win against

Woodlands.

The VIS soccer squad arrived in Kuala Lumpur at 6.00am Saturday morning after a nine hour overnight flight for their Malaysian tour, reports team officials. Several changes have occurred in the last few months, with the AIS seconding five players, two players transferring to VSF Premier League Clubs and Scott MacDonald moving to Southampton. Five fourteen year-olds and a thirteen year-old striker filled the scholarship positions.

The preparation for this tour has been extensive involving acclimatisation training, nutrition and hydration lectures, implementation of injury prevention and management strategies, psychology sessions with Pat Farrell (who worked with Mark Viduka as he completed his transfer to Celtic) and recovery training.

All of this on top of normal coaching hours, strength and conditioning training.

The key, however, to tournament soccer - four games in eight days - hinges

on the ability of the players to back-up with minimal rest periods. A comprehensive recovery training program is vital in tournament situations hence the need for highly qualified staff in the areas of Sports Medicine and Sports Science.

Australia is among the world leaders in these areas.

The daily schedule includes early morning stretching sessions, nutrition education, strategic coaching, video analysis, aquatic recovery classes, massage, injury prevention, ice therapy and rehabilitative exercise.

Matches are played every second day. Tactics and game plans are discussed during the team meetings and match performance is evaluated.

The first game was against the Kuala Lumpur Under 19 side yesterday (after going to press).

Read Inside Soccer next week for a wrap up of this and two other games on the VIS tour of Malaysia.

Card Update

PLAYERS:	Y	R	Tot
1 Jamie Harwood	10	0	10
2 Che Bunce	7	2	9
3 Harry James	8	1	9
4 Vince Savoca	8	1	9
5 Troy Halpin	6	2	8
6 Jacob Burns	7	1	8
7 Lee Jones	7	1	8
8 Goran Lozanovski	7	1	8
9 Nick Meredith	7	1	8
10 Aurelio Vidmar	7	1	8
11 Jason Vukadin	7	1	8
12 Danny Burt	8	0	8
13 Stuart McLaren	8	0	8
14 Gabriel Mendez	8	0	8
15 Andy Vargas	8	0	8
16 Dean Fak	8	0	8
17 Walter Ardene	5	2	7
18 Manny Gotis	6	1	7
19 Robert Liparoti	6	1	7
20 Dino Mennillo	6	1	7
21 Mark Silic	6	1	7
22 Chris Jackson	7	0	7
23 Darren McDonald	7	0	7
24 Claudio Pelosi	7	0	7

CLUBS:			
1 STM	63	6	74
2 Canb	63	6	69
3 Marc	63	6	69
4 SOly	62	5	67
5 Kngz	57	7	64
6 PPwr	58	6	64
7 SydU	58	5	63
8 WWol	57	4	61
9 MKni	52	7	59
10 PGry	49	6	55
11 AdlC	52	3	55
12 Gpsl	51	3	54
13 BStr	51	2	53
14 NSpr	40	4	44
15 Carl	34	4	38
16 Newc	35	2	37
TOTAL	831	75	906

	Home	Away	Total
Yellows	382	470	852
Reds	27	49	76
Total	409	519	928

REFEREES:	G	Y	R	Aver
1 Matthew Brown	28	111	14	4.5
2 Simon Micallef	26	95	6	3.9
3 Con Diamis	24	108	8	4.8
4 Gerry Connolly	24	55	7	2.6
5 Brett Hugo	23	94	10	4.5
6 Eddie Lennie	23	106	4	4.8
7 Mark Shield	23	99	9	4.7
8 Jeremy Blaney	16	35	3	2.4
9 David Dwight	12	43	3	3.8
10 Perry Mur	10	15	1	1.6
11 Derek Rugg	7	23	6	4.1
12 Brian Precious	6	29	3	5.3
13 Wayne Dade	6	33	2	5.8
14 Craig Zetter	2	6	0	3.0

Buonavoglia: maintaining a proud Newcastle tradition

In his rookie season in 1998/99 he was the little bloke with a bit of toe and a bloody long name. But riding on the back of Newcastle's fairytale rise and rise under coach Lee Sterrey, John Buonavoglia is probably this season's best boiled lollies to chocolates story.

So much so that a couple of his peers are already touting him as possible player of the year potential.

I wouldn't back him in that class of field - at least not yet - but his recent streak has given this classy little finisher every chance of ending 1999/2000 as the season's top goalscorer.

Closer to home, going into last weekend Buonavoglia was just two goals shy of breaking the club's single season record of 16 goals, set by Warren Spink way back in 1992/93.

When you consider silk finishers like David Lowe, Rod Brown, Spink and more recently Clayton Zane and Andy Harper have scored some goals up Birmingham Gardens way, Buonavoglia is joining some elite company.

Spink remains one of my all-time money men, his five club, decade long NSL career ending at 104 goals.

Spink was as dependable a close range finisher as anyone I've seen in this league over the last 15 years and a reliable double-figure goalscorer every season.

Little John's done well.

Oh, and it must rate a mention that also going into last weekend's games that the NSL's one true captain marvel, South Melbourne skipper Paul Trimboli, was just a single goal away from becoming just the 11th player in competition history to bag 100 career goals.

The league's resident genius scored his 99th at the Bob Jane against Adelaide Force last Wednesday night.

Already the holder of South Melbourne's NSL games and goalscorer records, Trimboli's next goal will also elevate him into the ranks of the currently three-strong elite club of players to have passed both the 300-game and 100-goal NSL milestones.

Only Rod Brown, Marshall Soper and John Markovski have achieved both of those lofty marks in the league's 24-season history.

Mind you, they'll have even more company sooner rather than later.

Andy Harper was only two games and three goals shy of both marks going into last weekend, while already acclaimed goalscorer centurions Francis Awaritefe and Damian Mori needed just six and nine games respectively prior to round 29 to achieve the 300/100 double.

Greg Blake

NSL TOP SCORERS:

PABLO CARDOZO 17
(Sydney Olympic)

MICHAEL CURCIJA 16
(South Melbourne)

JOHN BUONAVOGLIA(NB) 15

DAMIAN MORI (ACF) 14

CON BOUTSIANIS (PG) 13

ALISTAIR EDWARDS(PG) 13

ALEX MOREIRA (C) 13

STUART YOUNG (WC) 12

CROWD COMPARISON:

Cumulative to Round 29

99/00: 1,171,899

98/99: 1,144,714

NSL match reports and analysis follows on the next eight pages. The quotes of the week is on page 6.

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	(OVERALL)					(HOME)					(AWAY)							
	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS	GD	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A
PERTH GLORY	29	16	7	6	54	37	55	17	10	3	1	33	16	6	4	5	21	21
Wollongong Wolves	29	15	8	6	61	38	53	23	10	1	4	31	19	5	7	2	30	19
Sydney Olympic	29	14	6	9	49	34	48	15	7	5	2	31	15	7	1	7	18	19
Carlton	29	14	6	9	46	33	48	13	7	4	3	22	13	7	2	6	24	20
Marconi Stallions	29	14	6	9	43	38	48	5	8	2	4	21	17	6	4	5	22	21
Newcastle Breakers	28	13	8	7	41	35	47	6	8	4	2	27	18	5	4	5	14	17
Adelaide Force	29	11	8	10	41	31	41	10	8	3	3	28	14	3	5	7	13	17
Brisbane Strikers	29	11	8	10	37	33	41	4	6	5	3	25	15	5	3	7	12	18
Football Kingz	28	12	5	11	48	49	41	-1	7	3	4	26	22	5	2	7	22	27
Parramatta Power	27	11	5	11	43	37	38	6	7	4	3	24	15	4	1	8	19	22
South Melbourne	29	10	7	12	43	45	37	-2	7	4	4	26	16	3	3	8	17	29
Northern Spirit	29	11	3	15	38	48	36	-10	8	2	5	21	19	3	1	10	17	29
Melbourne Knights	29	10	6	13	30	50	36	-20	6	2	6	14	18	4	4	7	16	32
Canberra Cosmos	29	6	8	15	37	55	26	-18	4	3	7	17	19	2	5	8	20	36
Gippsland Falcons	29	6	8	15	17	36												

Three Spirit! Arnie's side lets loose

NORTHERN SPIRIT 3

Langdon 45, R Griffiths 76, Bingley 82.

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS 0

Friday night at North Sydney Oval, Sydney. Crowd 5,703.



MATCH STATS:



NORTHERN SPIRIT: P Henderson, P Moss, R Enes, M Bingley, M Cunico, T Cranney, M Langdon, N Berti (S Lyons 65), R Slater (I Crook 85), S Cranney, T Perinich (R Griffiths 60).



MELBOURNE KNIGHTS: M John, J Rajher (S Rados 77), J Vukadin, M Silic (Z Zold 60), D Nastevski, M Susa, D Cervinski (P Urhovic 46), T Murtaina, Abbas, A Kiratzoglou, D Vargas, I Kelic.

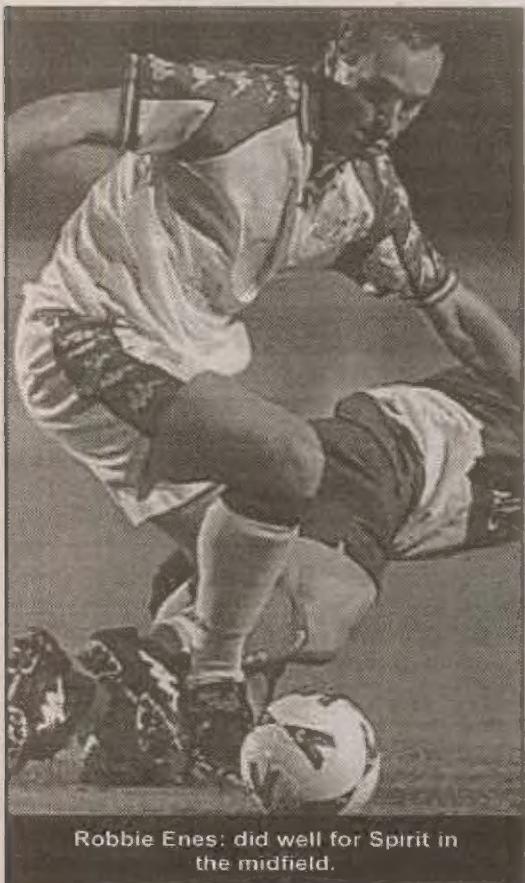
Yellows:

Spirit: Robbie Enes 65.
Knights: Jason Vukadin 67.

Best Players:

3. MATTHEW BINGLEY (SPIRIT)
2. Matthew Langdon (Spirit)
1. Michael Cunico (Spirit)

Referee: Craig Zetter.



Robbie Enes: did well for Spirit in the midfield.

By Paul Goodwin

A mistake by Knights keeper Martin John was the turning point on Friday night against Spirit. His weak clearance led to a free-kick which yielded the first goal for the home side in their 3-0 win.

The game looked highly likely to end in a stalemate as half time approached with neither side really troubling the two keepers.

It looked an uninspiring end of season affair, with little or nothing at stake for either team.

Then came the error which changed the complexion of the match.

The second half was an entirely different prospect with flowing football from the home side and some lively raids by the visitors.

When John under-hit his clearance Matthew Bingley was quick to pounce about 22 yards out from goal and just to the right of the penalty arc.

Defenders wrestled the ball from him before he could get in his shot and Adelaide referee Craig Zetter awarded a predictable free kick.

As Robbie Slater and Bingley stood over the ball, Italian super-star Nicola Berti peeled away to the left, expecting the pass. Instead Slater touched it to Langdon whose sweetly struck left footer hit the top left corner of a well beaten John's net.

Scoring right in front of the famous Bob Stand was just the tonic the locals needed and a moment later the first half came to a close.

It had been a period of typical frustration for Spirit who had far and away the best of the exchanges.

Tony Perinich was back in the side, leading the attack in the absence of the injured David Seal and he nodded a Sean Cranney cross wide in the 15th minute from a free kick awarded 30 yards out.

Cranney and his brother Troy started a game together for one of the few times since joining the club and both figured prominently.

It was Sean who lobbed over the bar from 20 yards in the 22nd after a series of high balls pumped into the box had not been cleared.

Sean also blasted over from a Langdon cross in the 23rd and John had to think quickly to punch to safety another tricky cross from Langdon in the 26th.

The only serious scare for the Knights before they fell behind was when Rody Vargas was forced to clear off the line as Berti tried to converge on an angled shot from the right by Bingley, which needed a sharper touch to turn it in.

Berti then nodded another Langdon cross over the bar in the 31st and long range shots from Robbie Enes sailed over as the frustration began to mount for home supporters in the dying stages of the first half.

After a bright opening to the second half which saw the Knights try hard for an equaliser, but in turn Spirit go close several times with shots and headers from Bingley, Berti and Slater just wide of the target, the visitors looked to have levelled things in the 61st.

The assistant's flag had been lifted well before Jason Vukadin nodded in a ball headed on for him by Zeljko Susa, but in the lead up Knights' players had already



Ryan Griffiths celebrates in front of the Macartney Stand after his 76th minute goal following a stinging shot by Bingley and a spill by John.

drifted into offside positions when the ball was played forward and Zetter had no difficulty in ruling against the 'scoring' side.

Joey Rajher had also driven a shot wide moments earlier for the Knights.

Spirit substitute Ryan Griffiths volleyed over from the left of the area after a smart cross from the right by Sean Cranney in the 65th.

A solid build up by the Knights who remained very much in the game saw Alex Kiratzoglou hit one from 30 yards which went just wide after an excellent team build up in the 75th.

A minute later the game was effectively over for the Melbourne side.

A pass by the Knights intended for Vargas was not dealt with adequately and Bingley, sharp as a tack this night, seized possession on the edge of the area and rifled in a shot which John could only beat away.

Griffiths was following up like any good poacher should and smashed the spilled ball into the roof of the net (see pic above for his celebrations.)

In the 82nd Spirit got a third. A great piece of work by Slater on the right saw his cross from the byline left alone at the near post and when it reached the far side Bingley was able to angle the ball in from close range for a deserved goal.

Substitute Shane Lyons almost made it four in the last couple of minutes when his pile driver from 30 yards just cleared the bar.

The Melbourne Knights had almost pulled one back in the 87th when Susa's diagonal ball from the left was met at the near post by Kiwi Paul Urhovic, whose snapshot was saved nicely by Paul Henderson near his line, one of the few real shots he had to deal with (catching crosses being his staple fare on this occasion.)

The result allowed Spirit to draw level with the Knights on points and gives them a chance of moving up to the top half of the ladder before the season ends, which is their aim now at this stage.

Bingley had a superb game, venturing forward on the flanks repeatedly and having a hand in all of the goals. Langdon was very effective on the flank, with Michael Cunico doing plenty of solid destructive work in the rearguard.

The game was the sixth win by the Spirit in its last nine at home and it has dropped points only to Perth Glory and South Melbourne in that period other than the setback against Wollongong.

It was also encouraging to see a bigger crowd for this one, cheered by a solid showing by Spirit at Marconi and better home form of late.

Melbourne Knights were not disgraced and should make Spirit work hard to move away from them in the remaining weeks of the season.

COMING SOON...
The importance of
being Ernest

Emie Tapai, Socceroo
journeyman in Singapore, plus
Troy Halpin's Glory daze



Aging warriors turn back clock to stun Stallions

FOOTBALL KINGZ 3

Vicelich 21, de Jong 57, Perry 86.

MARCONI STALLIONS 1

Z. Babic 15.

Friday night at Ericsson Stadium, Auckland. Crowd 4,877



MATCH STATS



FOOTBALL KINGZ:
Duke; Bunce, Moya, Jackson; Perry, Ngata, Vicelich (Kenyon, 81), Campbell; Rufer, de Jong (Hickey, 70), Lammers (Silva, 83)



MARCONI STALLIONS:
Turnbull; Gibson, Kim, Farah (Di Gia, 83); Invincible, Care (Zoric, 61), Maloney, Longo, Renaud; Babic, Awaritefe (Trajanovski, 70).

Yellows:
Marconi: B. Renaud (87).

BEST PLAYER:
3. W. RUFER (KINGZ)
2. H. Ngata (Kingz)
1. Z. Babic (Marconi)

Referee: Perry Mur

By Jeremy Ruane

Time may not be on their side these days, but two of New Zealand soccer's aging warriors made light of this fact when turning back the clock to produce vintage performances for the Football Kingz. This clash was played at a venue which has seen any number of memorable matches played on its impeccable surface during the last two decades of soccer in Auckland.

The Kingz came from behind to down in-form National Soccer League title contenders Marconi Stallions 3-1 before 4,877 wet but happy fans on a rain-soaked evening at Ericsson (formerly Mt. Smart) Stadium.

The foremost international soccer ground in Auckland throughout the 1980s and most of the 1990s, until the construction of North Harbour Stadium offered an alternative which is considered by some - certainly those who reside on the northern side of Auckland's arbour Bridge - to be a far superior venue, the Central Auckland ground has become the mecca for the city's rugby league fraternity in recent seasons.

On April 7, however, the game the world plays was back on familiar territory, and how Wynton Rufer and Fred de Jong celebrated the occasion.

They formed part of a three-pronged strike-force with a combined age of 109, John Lammers being the other member of the seasoned trio. While youthful exuberance is no longer theirs to call upon as frequently as they would like, a welter of experience certainly is, and the two former All Whites in particular made this count to telling effect.

Rufer was imperious, producing his finest display in a Kingz shirt yet. The quality of his passing, and his penchant for beating at least two opponents every time



Fred de Jong: loves playing against his former club Marconi.

with consummate ease was a delight to behold - how fortunate Europe was to see him when he was at his peak.

His performance was well worthy of a goal, but it was not to be this time round. Instead, that honour befell de Jong. Having turned thirty-six just two days prior, the tall striker had set his heart on making his comeback from injury in this match against his former club.

Just playing again was akin to a large helping of birthday cake for the former Fortuna Sittard professional, who seriously doubted whether he would ever kick a ball in anger again, such was the extent of his knee injury.

But not only was de Jong intent on having his cake, he wanted to eat it too! He got his wish, the win being the icing, and the cherry on top coming in the 57th minute, of which, more later.

For this was an enthralling encounter from start to finish, a captivating cornucopia of style and substance, of passion and panache, of skill and subtlety, liberally lavished with copious quantities of free-flowing football ... professional football in Oceania at its very best.

And yet, there was little hint of what was to come in the early stages, particularly from the Kingz, as Marconi held sway, and could well have killed the game off inside the first twenty minutes.

That they didn't was down to a mixture of bad luck and bad judgment. The former instance came in the tenth minute, when Francis Awaritefe was adjudged narrowly offside prior to setting up Zeljko Babic for what would have been the opening goal.

Babic duly scored this five minutes later, a cracking strike into the top corner of Daniel Duke's goal, the 'keeper beaten all ends up at his near post after the striker had bulldozed his way over the top of David Moya.

With nineteen minutes gone, Awaritefe breached the Kingz offside trap to leave himself with just Duke to beat. The 'keeper stood his ground and saved bravely, Moya and Ivan Vicelich, between them, clearing the danger.

Two minutes later, Vicelich was in action at the other end, ghosting in at the

near post to meet Jeff Campbell's inviting corner at full pelt, his header bulleting past a stunned Michael Turnbull to level the scores.

This was the spark the Kingz needed, because from here on in, did they play!

Rufer and Lammers both went close within minutes, de Jong the principal architect of both openings. After Chad Gibson had tested Duke from distance, Perry, Rufer and Che Bunce all went close to edging the Kingz in front, with de Jong going closest of all, Turnbull producing the save of the match thus far in the 31st minute to thwart his powerful downward header from Campbell's corner.

The visitors were very much second-best during this spell, but the Kingz still needed to be wary of their championship-chasing opponents, as witnessed by Christian Care's vicious dipping volley in the 33rd minute, which seared narrowly wide of Duke's left-hand upright from twenty-five yards, and Gibson's angled low-struck free-kick right on half-time, which the 'keeper saved well.

The home side were relentless, however, and two minutes after Care's effort, Marconi's penalty area momentarily resembled a pinball machine following Campbell's low cross-shot.

Then Rufer unleashed a thumping thirty-yarder which Turnbull turned to safety low to his right, thus denying the Kingz the half-time lead their efforts, to this point, richly deserved.

They didn't have to wait long to take the upper hand, mind, but before doing so, chances came about at both ends, Rufer, inevitably, responsible for the Kingz opening.

Meanwhile, Marconi had seemingly valid claims for a penalty ignored by referee Perry Mur in the 55th minute, as Chris Jackson appeared to use his arm to divert a Babic cross to safety in the penalty area.

That decision proved to be pivotal, for within two minutes, the Kingz were in front. Campbell delivered a free-kick from the left which floated beyond the gathered throngs at the near post, and beyond the flailing arms of Turnbull, to pick out de Jong, who, with the goal at his mercy, duly headed home to add the cherry to his birthday cake.

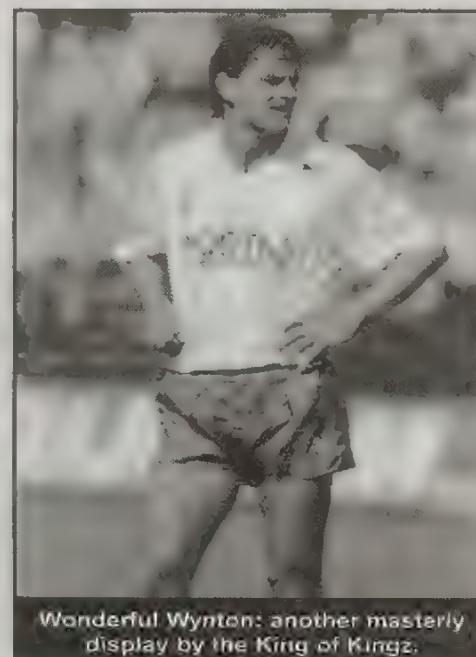
De Jong could have had another goal before he departed the fray, while Lammers, twice, Rufer and Leigh Kenyon were guilty of glaring misses as the Kingz pressed for a match-clinching goal.

For in light of this profligacy, the prospect of Marconi netting an equaliser still existed. The visitors had mounted a few raids of their own as the Kingz pressed for a clinching goal, but none had threatened Duke unduly.

Ten minutes from time, however, the alarm bells were ringing in the Kingz defence, as Babic and the splendidly-named Danny Invincible carved open the home team's left flank. The latter pulled the ball back for his team-mate, who had been impeded in the build-up by Jackson, but Babic's drive flashed narrowly over the bar.

Just before the finish, Duke saved from Vlado Zoric, with the rebound being lifted over the top from point-blank range by Brad Maloney. But by this time, the score had changed, and how!

Aaron Silva had replaced the tir-



Wonderful Wynton: another masterly display by the King of Kingz.

ing Lammers, and in the 86th minute, the Chilean striker took off on a darting cross-field run from the left flank, upon receipt of a pass from the impressive Harry Ngata. Silva laid the ball off to Noah Hickey, who touched it to his right.

Perry, scorer of a stunning goal against Northern Spirit three weeks ago, notched an even better strike this time. Arriving at pace, he met the ball first-time on the run, and from twenty-five yards, the sphere fair soared past the spellbound Turnbull into the top far corner of the net to round off a memorable 3-1 victory for the Football Kingz in some style.

This win added another chapter to the tales of famous matches played on a ground laden with footballing memories, both past and present.

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Kingz fight back



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Glory road to top two looking clearer now

SOUTH MELBOURNE 1

Lozanovski 67

PERTH GLORY 2

Edwards 3, 93+Sunday night at Bob Jane Stadium, Melbourne. Crowd 5,833.



MATCH STATS:

SOUTH MELBOURNE: Jones, De Amicis, Iosifidis, Orlic (Anastasiadis 84), Liparoti, Blatsis, Clarkson, Panopoulos, Trimboli (c) (Tsekinis 59), Lozanovski, Curcija (Magnacca 59), Coveny.



PERTH GLORY: Petkovic, Harnwell, Naven (c), Valle, Junior, Trajanovski (Ergic 58), Wehrman, Halpin, Miller, Edwards, Schwertz (Despotovski 84). Sub not used: Thorp.



Yellows:
South: Blatsis (90).
Glory: Harnwell (72).

Best Players:

3. NAVEN (GLORY)
2. Clarkson (SMelb)
1. Edwards (Glory).

Referee: Mark Shield



Glory celebrates its second, and killer, goal.



South's best: David Clarkson

By Alan Clark

Perth Glory kept its top two finish aims on track with a 2-1 victory. Glory coach Bernd Stange called "lucky" against last year's champions, South Melbourne, at Bob Jane Stadium on Sunday.

The win gives impetus to Glory's title chances, but the loss drops South to the ranks of this season's also-rans - its Finals hopes disappearing like the wafts of smoke which drifted across the ground late in the game from the far-side catering

stand

Stange was sure coming into the game that his talented team would earn at least a draw. "We were at full strength. All our players were back from Olyroo and other duties, and suspensions.

"I was very confident to pick up a point today. We played for a draw in the second half, and we had a lucky win," he said after the match.

The good luck Stange referred to was the fact that Glory's winner didn't arrive until deep into second-half added time, after Glory had been forced to defend desperately, when Alistair Edwards netted his second goal from a free-kick which bounced over South goalkeeper Chris Jones' dive and into the net.

For long periods of the game, Glory's defence was under siege. South launched waves of attacking possession football in its attempt to gain the victory which would have kept its season alive.

Fewer than half of the players on the field had touched the ball before Perth had scored the opening goal, barely three minutes in. Scott Miller had made space up the right after breaking up a South advance.

Miller cut inside, then passed to Alistair Edwards who was making a supporting run to his left and in space. The experienced Glory striker placed his shot across Jones and inside the far post.

"It was a disappointing goal because it came from our mistake," said South coach Ange Postecoglou after the game. "But what was more disappointing was that we got nothing out of a game that I thought we totally dominated."

"Tonight's performance wasn't indicative of our season, but the result was," he said.

Going behind meant that once again this season, South needed to chase the game.

Michael Curcija had the best of the early opportunities to bring South Melbourne back into the game midway through the half.

Fausto-De Amicis had picked up a loose Glory pass mid-pitch, and sent an

early through-ball to the speedy Olyroo, beating the Glory off-side trap in the process. Curcija sped goalwards, but Perth goalkeeper Jason Petkovic held his nerve, and when Curcija let loose his shot, it went to the outside of the near-post.

Jim Tsekinis, coming on just after the hour for the tiring Paul Trimboli, also had an opportunity shortly after his introduction, when he ghosted clear to meet De Amicis' cross, beating Petkovic in the air, but heading wide.

But it was a Goran Lozanovski free-kick special which produced the equaliser midway through the second-half.

Sustained South pressure ended with a diagonal ball being played to Kiwi Vaughan Coveny who was bundled off the ball as he raced goalwards. As the free-kick was to be taken from 25 metres and slightly to the right, this was Lozanovski territory.

Lozanovski's intent was not disguised, and his sizzling shot sped around the wall and past Petkovic's

despairing dive

Stange was sanguine about conceding a goal in these circumstances. "You can't do anything (about it)," he said. "We had Con Boutsianis (doing similar things for Glory). It was a fantastic goal. After it, I thought we started to struggle."

Indeed South's pressure was unrelenting, but the Glory defence was resolute, being marshalled skilfully by Garth Naven, playing a captain's role.

But there were moments of fragility still, including when Nick Orlic joined the attack and shot from deep inside the penalty-area, only for the ball to ricochet off-target.

Anthony Magnacca, brought in off the bench for the tiring Curcija, raced through late in the game, and only a smart diving save at his feet by Petkovic protect-

ed Glory.

Magnacca later laid a ball off for Steve Panopoulos whose shot only just cleared the bar from a similar position as his levelling goal against Adelaide City Force in the mid-week catch-up game.

But Glory grabbed all three points in added time from Edwards' 20 metre free-kick directly in front of goal.

With time fast running out, Con Blatsis had a glimmer of an opportunity to level with South's last attack of the night after a Tsekinis pass, but his shot across the face of the goal went wide of the far



Alistair Edwards: one of Glory's best and two-goal-scorer for the WA side.

post.

"We finished third last year, and we'll try to do better this year. If you sign a contract for Perth Glory, you have to win the Premiership - there's so much pressure in Perth with the (expectations of the) fans."

"With three home games and two away, we should finish in the top two now," said Stange.

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Grierson steals it in final minute



GIPPSLAND FALCONS 0 BRISBANE STRIKERS 1

Grierson 90

Saturday night at Mobil Park, Morwell. Crowd: 1,728

MATCH STATS:

GIPPSLAND FALCONS

Jevdjevic, Fak, Gotis, Durakovic, MacNicol, Vargas (Robertson 70), Bell, Puca, Hutchinson, Marcina, Sekulovski, [not used Savage, Mandic].



BRISBANE STRIKERS

Bolton, Gwynne (Bell 57), Stefanutto, Foster, Shoj, Hews, McLaren, North, Grierson, ... Meredith, McKain [not used Ditton, Webber]. Yellow cards: McLaren (66), McKain (48)



Best Players:

MEHMED
(GIPPSLAND)

DURAKOVIC

Nick Meredith (Brisbane)
Bojo Jevdjevic (Gippsland)

Referee: Jeremy Blaney



Bojo Jevdjevic: like fellow keeper Clint Bolton, the Falcons' gove man had an outstanding game.

By Cliff Hammond

If ever a match seemed doomed to grind out to a goalless draw, it was this game between Gippsland Falcons and Brisbane Strikers at Morwell on Saturday night.

The first half was a dour struggle between two competent defences, and the second half was just plain dull.

In fact, at times in the second half it seemed that the only people more bored than the crowd were the players themselves.

But then, the game was sensationaly turned upside down in the last thirty seconds of the match, when the Strikers committed daylight robbery to come away with the three points that keeps alive their finals aspirations.

After Brisbane tested out Falcons keeper Bojo Jevdjevic early with a shot from Stefanutto, play tended to be centred around the midfield, with most attacking moves breaking down as soon as they entered the penalty area.

Brisbane had more of the general

play, with Nick Meredith and John McKain forcing the ball forward at every opportunity, but Gippsland looked the more dangerous.

Robbie Puca put a chip shot just wide, then Mehmed Durakovic drew a fine save from Strikers keeper Clint Bolton with a shot from 25 metres.

The resulting corner was met by Durakovic with a volley that looked goal bound until it crashed into Chay Hews. With the very next attack, Gippsland's Andy Vargas volleyed a half clearance only to see Bolton save at the second attempt.

Gradually, as the half wore on, the Strikers' midfield began to turn possession into goal-scoring opportunities. A shot from Peter Grierson was saved well by Jevdjevic low down to his left. Just on the half hour, Foster rose above a group of Falcons defenders to head strongly down to the near corner of the goal, only to see his effort cannon off the post.

Meredith was seeing a lot of possession on the left wing, and his perseverance nearly paid off when he burst through the Falcons defence, but Jevdjevic came off his line quickly to smother the shot.

In the closing minutes of the first half Foster deflected a shot from Meredith towards the corner of the goal, and Jevdjevic threw himself full length to save.

McKain was given a yellow card early in the second half after a foul on Gippsland's Naum Sekulovski, and then Strikers' captain Stuart McLaren was booked for showing his studs in a tackle.

In an effort to break the deadlock, Brisbane substituted Matt Bell for Glenn Gwynne, and Gippsland brought on Sandy Robertson for Andy Vargas, but the second half had very few highlights.

Bolton showed why he's rated so highly by pulling off a sensational save after John Hutchinson had weaved his way through the Strikers defence and looked certain to score with a shot from right beside the penalty spot.

The match had cried out for a goal to spark some action, but with 90 minutes gone everyone was just killing time waiting for the final whistle.

One last forward thrust by the Strikers saw a speculative cross land in front of goal. Falcons' Robbie Puca appeared to be pulled down, and as the Falcons players hesitated the weak clearance fell to Peter Grierson on the edge of the penalty area.

With icy nerves, Grierson controlled the ball and then calmly placed it into the corner of the goal. With half the Falcons players appealing for a foul, and the Falcons keeper racing down the field claiming that Meredith had handled the ball.

Referee Jeremy Blaney pointed to the centre spot.

There is no doubt that the respective goalkeepers starred in this match, and it's difficult to choose between them. Bolton pulled off one miraculous save, and constantly marshalled the Strikers defence when Gippsland threatened to break through.



Falcons classy defender Mehmed Durakovic with legendary Diego Maradona during the 1994 World Cup qualifier against Argentina.

Jevdjevic kept the Falcons in the game with a number of good saves, and had no chance of stopping the winner. Nick Meredith worked very hard for the Strikers, and in the first half was clearly the most creative player on either team, although he faded a little in the second half.

However, my man of the match had to be Mehmed Durakovic at the heart of the Gippsland defence. His ability to read the play is uncanny, and he seemed to have the ball on a string.

Despite a niggling injury, he tidied up behind the Falcons lines without a single mistake that I saw, and twice went close to scoring in the first half.

Gippsland's vastly improved defensive record this season is due in no small part to the confidence that Durakovic inspires in his fellow defenders.

Overall, this was an unimpressive display by both teams, but the lucky three points may be just the boost that the Strikers need to carry them into the finals.



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Carlton milks United for another three points

SYDNEY UNITED 1

Genc 49.

CARLTON 2

McPherson 7, Marth 55.

Sunday afternoon at Sydney United Sports Centre, Sydney. Crowd 2,938.



MATCH STATS:

SYDNEY UNITED:

Hughes, Kupresak, Bosnar, Maric, Bozinovski, Rakic, Genc, Rastall (Saric 70), A Moric (Deur 62), Podeljak, Bolevski (Usljebrka 72).

CARLTON :
Anastasiadis, Horvat, McPherson, Douglas, Vasilevski, Thompson, Atkinson, Lapsansky, Marth (Terminello 81), Markovski (Slater 74), Packer (Moreira 63).

Yellows:

United: Genc 55, Kupresak 68, Bozinovski 70.
Carlton: Lapsansky 55, Marth 60.

Best Players:

3. ANDREW MARTH (CARLTON)
2. Aytek Genc (United)
1. Archie Thompson (Carlton)

Referee: Con Diomis



Aytek Genc: the veteran showed he still has what it takes at NSL level.

By John Vrataric

On a pitch more akin to a cow paddock Carlton dominated this game having scored early and running out 2-1 winners.

Carlton coach Stuart Munro, having played regularly on the ground as a Sydney United player few years ago, was surprised to see the condition of what used to be one of the best playing surfaces in the country.

"I can't believe how bad it is just now and I look at the team that they've got and it certainly can't be of help to them, they've got players that like to run with the ball and they're good passers and a pitch like that doesn't allow it," Munro commented after the match.

"It was pitch that suited us more with defensive players like Andrew Marth and Steve Horvat and the early goal allowed us to settle down."

In the run home to the finals this match against the bottomed placed Sydney United was one that Carlton had to win.

Carlton retained its team from last week with the only change in the squad was the exclusion of Simon Colosimo who injured himself during the week in a training game and wasn't risked for this game. Fortunately, the injury was not related to the knee problem sustained in that infamous Andy Cole tackle last year.

United added recently signed Ante Deur to its bench from last week's encounter with Perth Glory. Deur, a Sydney United junior, has spent the last two years with Croatian club Hajduk Split.

In front of a small crowd on a warm Sunday afternoon Carlton was the first team to settle down and soon was able to open the scoring with a simple goal from a corner.

Lubo Lapsansky floated it into the far post where the rangy Dave McPherson out-jumped the home defence and his downward header snuck under the body of Hughes. The ball trickled over the line as the defence desperately tried to clear it before it crossed the goal line.

The experienced Carlton duo of Markovski and Marth took over proceedings for the next period with both having pot shots on goal in effort to take advantage of the bumpy surface which had to the potential to be a nightmare for goalkeepers.

In the 11th minute a Markovski free kick from the right was hammered through the wall but straight at Hughes who was unable to hold onto it first time but recovered quickly enough to avert any danger.

Two minutes later Markovski won a ball in a challenge on a Bosnar and fired a first time left foot shot at goal which Hughes collected easily in his midriff.

In the 18th minute Marth collected a ball after another challenge on Bosnar but his right foot shot was easily saved by a well positioned Hughes.

United finally got their first shot on goal in the 28th minute when their most dangerous attacker, Tom Podeljak, collected a ball just in Carlton's half after a defensive clearance.

Podeljak took a few strides and with plenty of time and space picked his spot and unleashed a low curling shot that Carlton keeper Dean Anastasiadis did well to push around his left post for a corner.

A minute later McPherson had a second opportunity from a corner. Markovski's corner from the left was headed on towards the far post where the big Scot was lurking. The ball bounced just in front of him but his shot lacked accuracy and was cleared as it travelled across the goalmouth.

An incident free ten minutes ended when United had their best chance in the 39th minute. Tom Maric played a neat ball out of defence to the feet of Podeljak who took the ball a few strides across the field before providing the overlapping Aytek Genc with a perfect pass on the left.

Genc, in turn, provided a perfect



Andrew Marth: powerhouse performance from the Carlton inspiration.

cross to Nick Bolevski on the far post whose well struck header was brilliantly saved by an acrobatic Anastasiadis who pushed the ball over the bar for a corner.

The second half began brightly for the home team and they were soon on level terms via the experienced Genc who scored in the 49th minute after coming very close to equalising with a similar move earlier.

In the 47th minute Ante Moric's pass found Genc deep inside the Carlton half on the left from where he took the ball across the field towards the penalty box. He beat a couple of players and made space for himself to shoot but Anastasiadis saved without any problems.

Two minutes later impressive youngster Danny Vasilevski conceded a needless corner when his back-pass dissected two team-mates. The short corner found its way back to Genc who again ran across the field but this time went a little further and found a little more room for his shot.

The shot was struck firmly and Anastasiadis could do nothing but push it just inside his post as he dived low to his right.

In the 56th minute a foul by Genc on Lapsansky ten metres inside the United half proved fatal. Lapsansky took the free himself and his ungainly kick just reached McPherson on the edge of the box. The central defender mis-kicked and the ball looped over the defence where Marth was

the first to react and he coolly volleyed into the net.

Podeljak didn't give up and almost equalised three minutes later. Picking up a loose ball about 30 metres from the Carlton goal he marched forward about five metres and lashed a powerful shot which thundered against the cross bar.

The rebound fell to Moric who was sandwiched between two Carlton players and seemed to have been fouled but the referee saw nothing wrong and waved play on.

In the dying minutes as United searched in vain for the equaliser Carlton substitute Alex Moreira had a number of opportunities to add to the Carlton tally but bad finishing and Hughes combined to deny him.

Carlton held out till the end and completed a deserved victory that sets them up well for the run home.

Carlton was best served by the experienced Marth, McPherson and the exciting Archie Thompson who has settled well into an unfamiliar left wing back position. Marth's yellow card means that he will miss next week's match but the possibility of Colosimo returning to take his place is a welcome prospect as the finals loom.

In the United line-up Genc and the speedy Podeljak were United's best as the home side put on another useful display but without being able to put the finishing touches that they create.

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Olympic shows it can battle when needed

SYDNEY OLYMPIC 1
Cardozo 49
CANBERRA COSMOS 1
Watkins 72

Sunday night at Belmore Oval, Sydney. Crowd: 4,862



MATCH STATS:



SYDNEY OLYMPIC:
Perosh, Zoricich,
Tsekenis, Baillie,
Arambasic (Zorbas
68), Cardozo, Emerton,
Kalantzis (sent off 7),
Goutzioulis (Tome 74),
Kohler (Sinozic 78), Marusic.

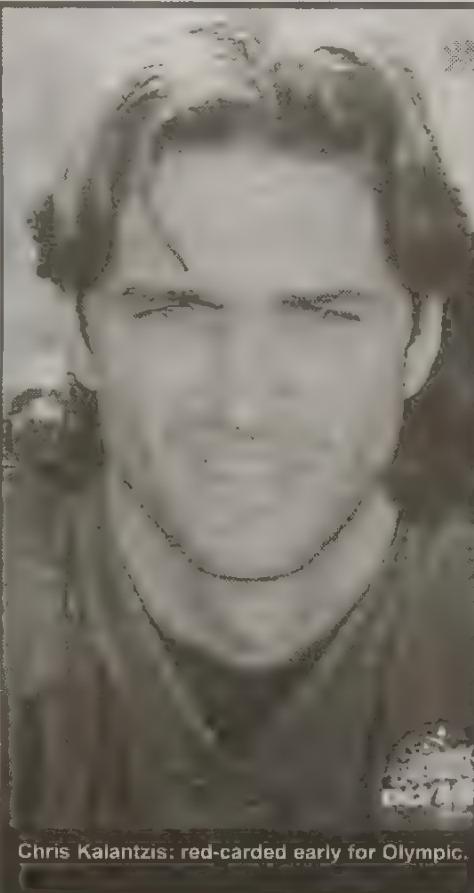


CANBERRA COSMOS:
Barlow, Popovich, Polak,
Winnie, Castro,
Hamilton, James,
Hocker, Clark, Roberts,
De Jesus (Watkins 70).

Red: Kalantzis 7.
Yellows: Winnie 36 (Cosmos),
Tsekenis 31 (Olympic).

Best Players:
3 - CARDOZO (OLYMPIC)
2 - Castro (Cosmos),
1 - Baillie (Olympic).

Referee: Simon Micallef.



Chris Kalantzis: red-carded early for Olympic.



Kresimir Marusic: worked hard in midfield for Sydney Olympic after the sending off.

By Ben Cubby

Ten-man Sydney Olympic fought out a 1-1 draw with Canberra Cosmos at Belmore Sportsground on Sunday night. The seventh minute dismissal of Chris Kalantzis turned the match into an uphill battle for the home side, and ultimately they did well to gain a point from the fast finishing Cosmos.

After a scoreless first half, Pablo Cardozo put Olympic in front with a glorious glancing header, but Canberra substi-

tute Danny Watkins came on to score the equaliser with his first touch of the ball.

Olympic started brightly, testing the visitors down the flanks and forcing a series of corners in the first few minutes.

The tide soon turned, though, and Canberra's first meaningful assault on the Olympic goal yielded the crucial send-off.

Harry James reacted swiftly to a well-weighted through ball and got in behind the Olympic backline.

Kalantzis - the last defender - clumsily hauled him down on the edge of the 18-yard box, and referee Simon Micallef adhered to the FIFA rulebook by brandishing an automatic red.

Olympic were shell shocked and so were the crowd. Ivo DeJesus curled the resulting free-kick high over the bar, but the damage had been done.

Both sides, playing cautiously, took a while to adjust to the ten-against-eleven scenario.

James and Alex Castro combined to stretch the Olympic defence on a couple of occasions, although for the most part Canberra failed to make the most of their numerical superiority.

In the 17th minute, industrious midfielder PJ Roberts saw his cracking, goal-bound shot tipped just over the bar by Olympic keeper John Perosh.

Not to be outdone, Cosmos goalie Grant Barlow produced a fabulous block to deny a rampaging Brett Emerton on the half hour mark.

The Olyroo captain then sent a venomous drive flying just wide of Barlow's goalpost, after a neat lay off by Kresimir Marusic.

Marusic, Olympic's midweek signing, showed that he hasn't lost his golden first touch during an unhappy sojourn with Belgian side Lommel.

The early send-off meant that Marusic had to cover a lot of ground in his

central midfield role, but he knuckled down uncomplainingly and produced a solid debut for his new club.

The pace quickened noticeably in the second half, and Olympic hit the lead four minutes after the interval.

Marusic curled a free-kick into the Canberra penalty box from wide on the right. Cardozo eluded his marker and dived forward to send his glancing header past the stranded Barlow and into the net.

Arambasic almost doubled the lead soon after the re-start but, with an open goal beckoning, he couldn't quite get a boot to Emerton's cross.

The Cosmos pressed forward relentlessly after the goal. Olympic did well to soak up the pressure, although they rode their luck when Castro's free header floated just wide after a Jason Polak corner.

Watkins finally nabbed the equaliser in the 72nd minute, after a mix-up in the Olympic six yard box.

Coach Tom Sermanni had sent him on just a minute before to replace the ineffectual Ivo de Jesus.

James saw his fierce shot parried by Perosh into the path of Scott Baillie. The stopper inadvertently cannoned the ball against his own goalpost, and it rebounded out conveniently for Watkins to slot home.

Cardozo drilled a shot into the side netting in the 74th minute, but neither side looked very threatening in the closing stages.

James spurned a clear-cut chance for Canberra in the 79th when he was unable to control a through ball from Watkins, and Perosh sprinted off his line to defuse the danger.

Barlow revealed a hidden talent for slapstick comedy in the 83rd, blasting a clearance straight into the backside of his captain Robbie Hooker.

The ball rebounded back to the keeper and he belted it straight back at the same player, with the same result.

At the third attempt, he managed to loft it to safety.

Watkins could have notched a winner in stoppage time, but his quick break down the middle was foiled by Chris Zoricich's last-ditch tackle.

In the dying seconds, Barlow fumbled a looping cross from Sebastian Sinozic, but the ball took a zany bounce away from the waiting Cardozo, and both sides had to settle for a point.

Referee Micallef had rightly waved away an Olympic penalty claim late in the match, when two players had collided going for a loose ball.

This decision, coupled with the early send-off, was enough to enrage certain sections of the Belmore crowd and ugly scenes followed the final whistle.

A mass of 'supporters' gathered around the players' tunnel, denying the match officials access to their dressing rooms for a full 10 minutes.

In defiance of ground announcements and the advice of more sensible spectators, bottles were thrown, and a large police presence arrived to defuse the situation.

After things had calmed down and attention was focussed back on the match itself, Olympic coach Branko Culina said "personally I don't think the referee had a bad game."

"I was pretty proud of our players today. It wasn't easy, we lost our last three games. It's never easy playing with ten



Daniel Watkins: scored the Canberra goal in a 1-1 draw.

men. Canberra's not a bad side, I was happy that we got something out of the game.

"We had six players out today - Thomas, Wilson, Juric, Mendez, Phillips and Nick Carle - and four of those would have started in the first eleven.

"There are positive signs, hopefully we'll have some of those players back next week. We showed character."

Canberra's Tom Sermanni said "Danny Watkins did well coming on, getting a goal is good for his confidence as he hasn't had one for a while."

"I was happy with Alex Castro, it was his first game since the 15th of October. He did well to last."

"Also, Andrew Clark did a good job on Brett Emerton - who has given us problems before."

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Wolves' top two dreams still a reality



WOLLONGONG WOLVES

Petrovski 34

ADELAIDE CITY FORCE

Sunday night at Brandon Park, Wollongong. Crowd: 5,518.

MATCH STATS:



WOLLONGONG:
Pogliacomi, Ceccoli,
Stanton, Cervinski,
Horsley, Reid (Robertson
69), Young, Chipperfield,
Petrovski (Souris 94),
Spencer (Huxley 87), Mennillo



ADELAIDE CITY: Cagalj,
Mori, Veart, Sabljak,
Vidmar, Cartwright
(Lagati 79), Brain (Day
73), Kemp, Costanzo,
Hassell (Kim 79), Pelosi

Yellow cards

Wollongong: Pogliacomi, Reid,
Ceccoli, Young
Adelaide: Sabljak

Best players

3. CECCOLI (WOLLONGONG)
2. Young (Wollongong)
1. Petrovski (Wollongong)

Referee: Eddie Lennie

By Stephen Webb

Wollongong have grabbed a tighter grip on a top-two place with this hard-fought win over Adelaide City. That they held on to their lead for an hour and that two other goals were disallowed testifies to Wolves' defending and attacking prowess. Numbers of corners and shots wide of target were similar for both sides, but Wollongong's rate of shots on target was far superior.

Lapses in midfield, however, may lead to Wolves' undoing as the season draws to its climax. coach Nick Theodorakopoulos was conscious of his midfield's failure to track back in the first half and to make better use of possession in the second.

Wollongong made their usual bright start. Stuart Young put Matt Horsley into Adelaide's penalty area with less than a minute gone. The Wolves skipper couldn't keep the ball in play, however.

The home side had a let-off in the fifth minute when Les Pogliacomi came out of his area to foil - and foul - Damien Mori. The Wollongong 'keeper was lucky to only receive a yellow card; though that will be enough to keep him out of Wollongong's game against Canberra on Friday night.

From the free kick the ball was headed over the crossbar.

Paul Reid was in good touch early on. Robert Stanton put in a good tackle on Claudio Pelosi. And Carl Veart made his presence felt defending against Scott Chipperfield and then with probing long balls to the Adelaide forwards.

At this stage Wollongong were moving forward with measured build-ups while Adelaide were relying on long balls and fast counter-attacks.

In the 14th minute a cross by Pelosi



Stuart Young: another effective showing for Wollongong by the Englishman.

on the right, directed to Mori at the near post, won Adelaide a corner.

Another important Stanton tackle ended a strong run from midfield by Louis Brain.

A good long ball by Veart was cleared from Wolves' penalty area by David Cervinski under pressure from Mori and Matthew Kemp.

In the 18th minute Saso Petrovski headed over the Adelaide crossbar after Young pulled back a Reid cross from the right.

Reid was in the action a minute later, hitting the back of the net with a deflected shot from 22 metres out. Unfortunately for Wollongong the deflection came from Petrovski in an offside position.

Petrovski could have made amends almost immediately when Young provided him with the ball as he ran into the penalty area with only Adrian Cagalj to beat. But the Wollongong striker hit the ball straight at the Adelaide 'keeper.

The action switched to the other end in the 23rd minute when an Alvin Ceccoli tackle denied Mori a good chance. The ball was only cleared as far as an Adelaide player who forced a save from Pogliacomi.

Adelaide's respite was brief, however

Cagalj had to dive onto a Young cross to prevent Petrovski having an easy chance. Kemp dramatically dug out a Cervinski cross from the right.

Wollongong's pressure was rewarded when, in the 34th minute, Scott Chipperfield turned into trouble but won a free kick on the edge of Adelaide's area. After two tap-ons from Reid's free kick, Dino Mennillo shot, Cagalj couldn't hold and Petrovski was on hand to give Wollongong a winning lead.

In the 40th minute Young delivered a beautiful long ball from the right into the path of Petrovski running into the left side of Adelaide's area. Petrovski was caught by a saving tackle for which Wolves fans wanted a penalty but which only resulted in a corner.

Adelaide put on the pressure in the dying minutes of the first half with Wollongong conceding several corners.

An early highlight in the second half was Chipperfield running down Aurelio Vidmar. Another was Young displaying smart skills out of defence on the left side of the pitch and passing to Petrovski who crossed to Reid. Reid, though, couldn't get a shot in and put it further right for Horsley who shot harmlessly across goal.

In the 51st minute Noel Spencer made a strong run towards goal before delivering a fine ball to Young who could only make ineffective toe contact.

Adelaide couldn't get themselves into scoring positions. Long balls were won in the air by Ceccoli and Cervinski or safely dealt with by Pogliacomi. The rare shot was from distance and wide.

Reid, meanwhile, hit a lovely long ball to Young who won a corner. Angelo Costanzo then caught Young who'd received another sweet ball, this time from Petrovski.

Horsley hit a long shot on target after several one-twos were shut down on the edge of the Adelaide area.

In the 65th minute Petrovski gave Reid an excellent chance in front of goal - but he skied it. Two minutes later Petrovski missed a chance. He beat Cagalj in a race to a though ball but slid his shot centimetres wide of the left upright.

During an Adelaide counter, Kemp gave himself a lot of space by beating Mennillo and Chipperfield but his cross was cleared by Pogliacomi's diving punch.

Cagalj was the hero at the other end in the 68th minute. After a long run down the right Ceccoli crossed to Petrovski whose header Cagalj just touched over the bar.

Adelaide came back strongly after the 76th minute. They were breaking fast with an overlap on the right. Mori struck at the end of an express run and Pogliacomi could only punch it away for a corner.

Wolves were then pinned down by several corners, one for which Day rose high but headed wide.

In the 79th minute Ceccoli made a great (but controversial) stop on Pelosi who was turning to shoot from close range. Ceccoli was soon frustrating Adelaide further by closing down Mori.

Everyone at Brandon Park, except the officials who detected an infringement in the penalty area, thought Mennillo scored direct from a corner in the 84th minute.

Not surprisingly, referee Eddie Lennie was very unpopular with the crowd - after the game. Theodorakopoulos was circumspect but expressed doubt about some decisions, not only those that went against Wollongong.

Adelaide coach Zoran Matic gave credit to Wollongong's aerial ability. He said Wolves had many players behind the ball and the "defence was well organised; there wasn't going to be an easy chance," he said.

He thought Adelaide won in the first half several times down the right but did nothing with it. "It doesn't help you if you don't use it," he said.

Of that exposure down the flank



Alvin Ceccoli (and fan): the former Greek First Division player looked the goods against the Zebs at Brandon Park, Wollongong. Pic by Stephen Webb.

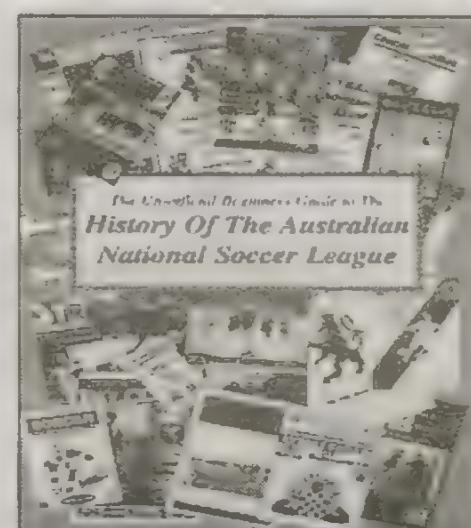
and his players' failure to track back, Theodorakopoulos said, "It is hard to play a 3-4-3 system when you are attacking so vigorously and then expect your two central midfielders to be able to get back all the time."

In the formation they had it was difficult to maintain good levels of running for 90 minutes, he said.

But he was also aware that, in the second half, Wollongong picked up a lot of loose ball and didn't do enough with it.

Matic said every game would be tough as his team attempted to reach the finals. He was still unsure if Alex Tobin, missing from the match against Wolves because of a cut sustained last Wednesday, would be available next weekend.

Wollongong will be missing Ceccoli and Pogliacomi through suspension and probably Esala Masi on duty for Fiji.



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2-2 draw pleases neither side

SOUTH MELBOURNE 2

Trimboli 18, Panopoulos 63

ADELAIDE CITY FORCE 2

De Amicis 46+, Vidmar 60

Wednesday night at Bob Jane Stadium, Melbourne. Crowd 3,868.



MATCH STATS



SOUTH MELBOURNE:
Udvaracz, De Amicis, Iosifidis, Liparoti, Blatsis, Clarkson, Panopoulos (Magnacca 88), Trimboli (c) (Tsekinis 82), Lozanovski, Curcija, Coveny (Anastasiadis 82).



ADELAIDE CITY FORCE: Cagalj, Costanzo, Tobin (c), Cartwright, Veart, Brain, Kemp (Ligati 93+), Vidmar, Sabljak, Mori, Hassell. Subs not used: Day, Kim.

Yellows.

South: Coveny (20).
Force: Brain (24), Vidmar (65).

BEST PLAYER:
3. PANOPoulos (SMELB)
2. Mori (Force)
1. Hassell (Force).

Referee: Jeremy Blaney.

By Alan Clark

Neither South Melbourne nor Adelaide City Force would have been happy with the consequences of their 2-2 draw on Wednesday evening at Bob Jane Stadium as both clubs caught up their deferred round 25 game. The result makes it difficult for either side to claim a Finals berth as the season draws to a close, and the gap to be made up is still significant.

The most satisfied onlooker on the night was Carlton assistant coach Fabio Incantalupo, watching the unfolding events from the back row of the Grandstand in this deferred round 25 game.

"It was a good game. But a terrible result - for both teams, I guess," said South Melbourne coach Ange Postecoglou after the match.

Goalkeeper Milan Udvaracz made a return to the side after a lengthy absence and the excellent form of previous number two keeper Chris Jones. Jones had failed a fitness test after spraining his back, meaning the tall Hungarian got back into first-team action for the first time since mid-December.

Just after the quarter-hour a sweet move played down Adelaide City's right side led to three City players lined up at the edge of the South Melbourne penalty-area outnumbering the now-strained South defence. Carl Veart touched it on to Aurelio Vidmar who was made the spare man in the play, but Vidmar shot wide with only Udvaracz to beat.

"If you want to give it to somebody (in that position) you give it to Vidmar," said Adelaide City coach Zoran Matic after the game. "I just can't believe (he missed).

He was free, he could have walked it in. Even experienced players make mistakes."

Veart has been playing in a more withdrawn role than he has in previous seasons, and has been more effective as a result, much to the satisfaction of Matic.

"He had a shocker last year - he was still up in the air (from his overseas playing experience) we had to get a parachute to get him down.

"But this year, I changed his position, and he started to perform. He's played well (whether) in the stopper's position, or in that last midfielder's position."

Vidmar's miss proved costly, as in the South foray that immediately followed, captain Trimboli opened the scoring with his second goal of the season, and to emphasise the rarity value, it was a header.

Goran Lozanovski, seemingly up for this game from the start, had teased Nick Sabljak after receiving a ball down the right, waiting until Sabljak had been manoeuvred into marginally the wrong position before whipping in the decisive cross to Trimboli at the far-post.

Chances were spurned by both teams in the minutes which followed. Damian Mori was pushed wide by Udvaracz as Mori ran on to a diagonal ball, but only just enough to put Mori off his shot. Returning Olyroo Michael Curcija had a red-hot streak, the best of which was a stinging shot from an acute angle which City goalkeeper Adrian Cagalj got his finger-tips to push wide.

Against Adelaide City however, itself seeking Finals Series action, a one-goal South lead was never going to be enough. The equaliser was always threatened, but when it came, it came at the cruellest time for South, and in the most unfortunate of circumstances.

The hard-working Bradley Hassell won a ball and let fly with a shot, but the ball deflected from a South defender and ran wide where Louis Brain chased it down, beating Udvaracz on the way. From the narrowest of angles, as he had by now reached the goal-line, Brain sent in a cross, hoping a City shirt was following up his endeavours.

The unfortunate Fausto De Amicis however, turned the ball in at the near post for an equaliser one minute into first-half added time.

The goal was greeted with stunned disbelief by the sparse home support, reduced in numbers surely by their club's disappointing season.

And so it was with resignation that they accepted City's second, which arose from a well-worked Adelaide move begun deep and on a break.

Matthew Kemp, midway in his own half, played a perfectly-weighted through ball for Mori to run down in a chase he was always destined to win. Mori then sent over a cross to where Vidmar rose unchallenged to head home with the South defence comprehensively split.

But South scrambled back into the game within three minutes. A corner was earned following South pressure. As it came over, a clear push on tall defender Robert Liparoti who had made the long journey from the backline for the corner,



Steve Panopoulos (blue shirt), standout performance for the Oceania Champions and back-to-back Aussie title-holders in their midweek 2-2 draw with City

was seen by everyone but referee Jeremy Blaney. Before the crowd's baying had subsided, the half-cleared ball fell to Steve Panopoulos just outside the area whose first-time shot crashed into the net past the despairing dive of Cagalj.

Speaking of the push, Postecoglou said. "It was pretty clear-cut wasn't it? But Pana stuck it away well. The good thing about it was that we were (behind) - the season's pretty much over - and it would have been easy for (the players) to stop and give up. But I thought we played out best stuff after we went 2-1 down."

"We shouldn't have conceded that second goal so early after we went 2-1 ahead. We needed five minutes cushion to settle because that's a very vulnerable time," said Matic.

Both teams had chances to re-take the lead in the remaining half-hour: Coveny put over after bringing down and controlling a route one ball from Lozanovski after great lead-up work from Trimboli.

Mori and Hassell had been combining well throughout the contest, and once again the double-act resulted in a shot from Hassell only just being palmed away by Udvaracz.

Then in a moment that would have stretched credibility, Con Blatsis, returning to the side following Olyroo duty in Europe, crossed to the far post only for Brain - himself the beneficiary of an own-goal earlier in the game - to turn it towards his own net, grateful at the last Michael

Cartwright was able to clear it from the goal-line.

Although South's Finals chances are on life-support, Postecoglou wasn't giving up hope. "We faced the in-form team of the competition (tonight), and I thought we more than matched them. If we can do that for the last six games and go undefeated - whatever happens as far as the Top Six - so be it. Everyone's talking about 52 or 53 points (to make the Finals). I think that's about right - if that's the case we need to win six in a row."

Matic too was focusing on the target of 52 points. "We've got 41 - we need eleven. We'll need more or less four wins (from the last six games)."

But it was Incantalupo's smile that was broadest.

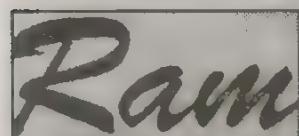
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Stallions make their charge

Chris Conti reports that in a game where both teams played attractive football, Olympic Youth took their chances and came up with a 2-0 win on Sunday night at Belmore Oval.

The ACT Academy had enough opportunities to stitch the match up before the 70th minute when John Kriazopoulos slotted a penalty home and 7 minutes later when Alex Duric added a second.

The game began in sizzling fashion when Olympic's Mark Bariamis sent over a centre which Duric headed goalbound only to see Angelo Konstantinou in the Academy make a good save.

At the other end the ACT's Stephen Kemp chipped over the Olympic defence to Paul Ivanic who hit the bar in a contest with the Olympic custodian George Bouhoutsos. Olympic's Australian Schoolboy representative, Robert Gaspar, then sent a shot just over, while Konstantinou saved again from another Duric header.

Olympic's Anthony Doumanis was given the ACT defence a tough time and in the 35th minute a curling centre was jugged by Konstantinou before he made it safe. Ivanic had another opportunity but the teams went into the break level.

Early in the second half Cosmos player, David Arranz, playing for the Academy after returning from illness sent over a cross which Daniel Aliffi nearly converted but Bouhoutsos and his defence cleared the ball for a corner.

Olympic then dealt two killer blows to the Academy. Lee Miot made a strong and determined run into the box, the ACTAS did not clear the ball, and the referee adjudged that Konstantinou in diving at the ball, had

brought down Miot. Kyriazopoulos despatched the penalty kick.

Olympic's coach, Peter Papanikitas then brought on the strong running Ali Chahine for Dyan Macallister. Chahine immediately made an impact with a determined run down the right and a shot which Konstantinou could only push into the path of Duric who had the simplest of chances to put Olympic two up, a lead which they comfortably held for the remainder of the game.

ACTAS: Angelo Konstantinou, David Arranz, Ian Waldon, Dom La Butte, Stephen Kemp, Adam Williams, Matt Anstey, Alvaro Guzman (Steve Amott), Daniel Aliffi, Goran Veljanovski (capt) (Andrew Aliffi), Paul Ivanic (Danny Agnello). Sub not used: Doug Hynson.

SYDNEY OLYMPIC YOUTH: George Bouhoutsos, Peter Biviano, Lee Miot, Andrew Durrante, George Nohra, John Kyriazopoulos, Robert Gaspar (Dimitri Nicolau), Mark Bariamis, Alex Duric, Anthony Doumanis (Huseyin Nizam), Dylan Macallister (Ali Chahine). Subs not used: Arthur Diles, Mark Stavroulakis.

Theo Katsaros reports that the N.S.W.I.S. defeated the Sydney United Colts in a postponed match from Rd 27. The home side led after 26 minutes courtesy of a Brett Holman strike. Holman doubled the lead on the hour as the Institute took control. Matthew Biggins sealed the result with ten minutes to play after coming on as a substitute.

Another deferred fixture saw the Marconi Stallions overcome the Newcastle Breakers Colts in Newcastle on Wednesday night. The visitors trailed 1-0 at the break but two goals in the second half clinched a 2-1 victory. Scorers for the Stallions were Josaia Saturaga Junior and Kevo Gulessarian. Adam Hughes opened the scoring for the Breakers in the 30th minute.

The Parramatta Power continued their charge to the minor premiership on Friday night in Newcastle. The Power scored an emphatic 4-1 victory over top 4 candidates the Newcastle Breakers to almost secure the title in their debut season.

Two strikes from Luke Roodenburg and singles to Brendan Santalab and Danny Townsend made it 4-0 before the Breakers replied in the 86th minute through James Georgeff.

The Q.A.S. recorded a resounding 7-0 win over the Marconi Stallions Colts in yet another deferred fixture. Chris Messina bagged a hat-trick and Alex Davani scored a double for the victors. Lawrence Drake and Sean Walsh chimed in with singles.

The Queenslanders backed up on Saturday against the N.S.W.I.S. but could not regain the scoring touch of a night earlier and had to settle for a scoreless draw.

Two goals in stoppage time saved the Northern Spirit and broke the hearts of the Sydney Olympic Academy. Olympic led after 22 minutes through Christian Cevenini before Ryan Griffiths levelled in stoppage time at the end of the first half.

Olympic went ahead again in the 64th minute courtesy of Anthony Sarmonikas' 10th goal of the season. Just as it seemed that the match was safe for the visitors the match turned in a couple of minutes. Phillip Gregorace put the ball into his own net before Simon Catanzaro snatched an unlikely winner with almost the last kick of the match.

On Sunday, Sydney United handed the Marconi Stallions Colts their second loss in three days. The Stallions led 2-0 at the break courtesy of a double to Alex Brosque. Brosque increased his tally for the season to 12 but the goals could not secure the win for his side.

The Pumas fought back in the second half and were assisted by an own goal from Jason Baron in the 57th minute. Steven Ralevski equalised five minutes later before Ray Younis scored twice for the hosts to seal the 4-2 win.

Josaia Saturaga Junior opened the scoring for Marconi Stallions after 36 minutes to give the hosts a one-goal advantage at the break. The 3-0 victory was sealed within the hour when Mike Smith and Daniel Severino added singles.

The Newcastle Breakers Colts scored a 3-1 win over the Wollongong Wolves Colts. Chad Mansley and Peter Juchniewicz scored in the first half for the Breakers before Dean Mackenzie reduced the deficit for the Wolves. The match was wrapped up in the final minute when Alex Provost scored the third for the hosts.

Wolves beat Sydney United Colts 4-2. Paul O'Grady scored then Fernando Pellegrino levelled four minutes later.

Steven Dimitrovski and Steven Markovski scored within ten minutes of each other to give the Wolves a 3-1 lead.

Paul Orlovic replied after 37 minutes to reduce the lead at half time. Dimitrovski netted his second five minutes into the second half to end the scoring.

NORTHERN DIVISION NYL

	P	W	D	B	L	F	A Pts
PARRAMATTA POWER	27	21	4	2	2	83	12 67
Northern Spirit	27	18	4	2	5	78	34 58
Sydney Olympic	27	17	5	2	5	80	36 56
Marconi Stallions	24	16	2	1	6	66	27 50
A.I.S.	27	15	3	2	9	81	38 48
Q.A.S.	26	15	3	2	8	75	43 48
Newcastle Breakers	24	15	1	1	8	48	30 46
Wollongong Wolves	27	12	5	2	10	41	40 41
Sydney United	26	13	1	1	12	45	52 40
A.C.T.A.S.	25	9	7	2	9	39	45 34
Newcastle Colts	27	10	2	1	15	40	52 32
Syd. Olympic Academy	26	9	1	2	16	46	82 28
N.S.W.I.S.	25	6	7	2	12	37	38 25
Marconi Stallions Colts	26	6	4	2	16	39	77 22
Northern Spirit Colts	27	5	6	2	18	26	61 21
Sydney United Colts	25	3	3	2	18	27	71 12
W'gong Wolves Colts	26	1	2	2	23	14	119 5

ROUND 29

N.S.W.I.S.	3	Sydney United Colts	0
Holman 26', 62', Biggins 80'			
Newcastle Colts	1	Marconi Stallions	2
Hughes 30'		Junior 55', Gulessarian 66'	

Marconi Stallions Colts	0	Q.A.S.	7
		Davani 5', 62', Messina 31', 79', 81', Drake 63', Walsh 89'	

Newcastle Breakers	1	Parramatta Power	4
Georgeff 86'		Townsend 31', Roodenburg 36', 57'	

N.S.W.I.S.	0	Q.A.S.	0
Northern Spirit	3	Olympic Academy	2

R Griffiths 45', own goal 90'	Cevenini 22',		
Catanzaro 90'	Salmonikas 64'		

Sydney United	4	Marconi Stallions Colts	2
(own goal 57', Ralevski 62', Brosque 37', 42'			

Marconi Stallions	3	Northern Spirit Colts	0
Junior 36', Smith 56', Severino 60'			

Newcastle Colts	3	Wollongong Colts	1
Mansley 31', Juchniewicz 34', Provost 90'		Mackenzie 64'	

Sydney Olympic	2	A.C.T.A.S.	0
Kyriazopoulos 70p, Duric 77'			

Wollongong Wolves	4	Sydney United Colts	2
O'Grady 4', Markovski 33'		Pellegrino 8', Orlovic 37'	

Dimitrovski 22', 50'			
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Tuesday 11 April, 2000

By Roy Hay

In what David Poole described as the game of the season in terms of quality South Melbourne and Carlton played each other to a standstill at Bob Jane Stadium, though neither side had a goal to show for its efforts.

The skill level was uniformly high and the match was a pleasure to watch. The closest to a goal was a fearsome shot by Patrick Kishnoba of South Melbourne which rebounded so hard from the upright that it nearly knocked out the kicker as it flew back at him.

The game was well handled by the referee and both sides showed why they will be challenging for the title in the play-offs. The single point was enough to take Carlton back to the top of the table, with South Melbourne now fourth on goal difference from the fast finishing South Dandenong.

South Dandenong came back from behind three times before beating a powerful Gippsland Falcons team by five goals to four.

Senior striker Peter Kakos put the Falcons in front in 8 minutes, but Xhezair Suleimani who recently transferred to South Dandenong from Bulleen equalised in 20. Kakos struck again in 26 and this time Fitim Ibrahimli levelled four minutes later.

Tony Pardo restored the Falcons advantage before Linim Rasimi pulled South Dandenong level again. Suleimani's second goal in 64 minutes gave his side the lead for the first time, but Kakos completed his hat-trick in 83 minutes to set up an grandstand finish.

With three minutes left Ibrahimli grabbed what turned out to be the winner, though there were still chances to come for both teams. Coach Goran Runje said afterwards, "Our defence was down on its usual form, but everyone worked hard throughout the ninety minutes for what was a great result".

Preston recorded a superb two-all draw at home to the Melbourne Knights, marked a brilliant display in goals from keeper Vasko Jolevski. The Knights led twice and each time were pegged back.

After an even, scoreless first half, Chris Tabak put the Knights in front in 52 minutes, only for Daniel Filev to equalise ten minutes later. Leading scorer Anthony Pelikan could not be kept off the scoresheet and he regained the initiative for the Knights in 70 minutes. There were only seven minutes to play when Preston's pressure allowed Filev to score his second equaliser of the day.

Melbourne Knights Academy downed Bulleen by two goals to one at Knights Stadium to record the Academy's fourth win of the season. Ivan Mioc put the Academy in front in 8 minutes and Luigi Gullaci equalised for Bulleen in 32 minutes. That is how it stayed until the last six minutes when Hrvoje Matkovic popped up to grab the winning goal for the Academy.

The VIS is off in Malaysia, while the Round 4 match between South Melbourne and Melbourne Knights Academy was postponed.

A list of known forthcoming fixtures for the next two weeks is shown, but there may be changes and fans should check with the clubs before making a trip.

SOUTHERN DIVISION NYL

It should have been 12, says Lemezina

ACT ROUND-UP

Jamison Oval was the venue for the second round match of Canberra Soccer's Premier League, between Belconnen United and Canberra Deakin writes Kyle McGarrigle, with Belconnen running out convincing winners 5-0.

Belconnen United got off to a great start after some high paced soccer, scoring their first goal in the 7th minute.

S Ralston crossed the ball perfectly to Marko Perinovic from 40 metres out, who nailed a header in the goal.

Belconnen's second came just nine minutes later when Scott Manson was able to slot the ball past the keeper from just outside the goal mouth, after some scrappy play inside the box.

The 22nd minute saw Belconnen's third goal when Jaime Mauro's corner was headed in by Daniel Camara.

The fourth came after just 31 minutes, when replacement Lee Pietrukowski crossed the ball into Perinovic who just guided the ball in off his right foot to claim his second goal.

The 49th minute saw Belconnen's fifth and last goal, when Pietrukowski put a beautiful ball ahead for the open Camara, who squeezed the ball past the keeper.

Belconnen's victory came as a result of the many opportunities they made for themselves, and their ability, particularly in the first half, to take advantage of those opportunities.

A disappointed Canberra Deakin captain/coach Tony Lemezina said: "I just thought the boys weren't on the ball today, they didn't come here ready to play and to Belconnen's

credit they played really well.

"5-0 was a good result. It should have been about 12-0 I reckon".

On the other hand, Belconnen United coach Lino Fiorese was very pleased with his team's performance: "As soon as we scored our first goal we just dominated the game from there on in.

"To be honest we could have had a couple more in the second half and the scoreline could have been blown out of all proportions".

A double from Simon Foxhill gave the University of Canberra an upset 2-1 victory over the Capital City Suns at Queanbeyan's Riverside Stadium on Sunday writes Nathan Long.

The Pumas ran the Suns ragged in a match that was played in hot weather. Uni passed and ran through the mid-field all day despite the energy sapping heat. The Suns mid-field play was not helped by a knee problem for Dion Cannell or Manuel Sermano taking anti-biotics for the flu.

However, it was Uni's 'drover's dog' attitude to the hard work, which saw them win. They had a few genuine chances in the first half, the best of which came in the 12th minute.

Selek chipped over a long ball over the midfield to Dominic Bartone on the right side. After beating one man and drawing another, all Bartone had to do was pass inside to a wide-open Foxhill for a simple one-on-one with Suns keeper Mick Kirkham.

Instead, Bartone held onto it and got pinned in the corner, allowing the Suns defence to drop back into place.

Ten minutes later, Bartone chipped the ball to Utah Nirvana in front of goals, only for

him to shoot over the crossbar.

In the 40th minute, Bartone took a corner for Uni and lofted it into the middle of the six yard box. Foxhill leapt high in a pack and deflected the ball past Kirkham for a 1-0 lead going into halftime.

The Suns stepped it up a gear and began to put constant pressure on the Pumas. In the 60th minute, a spot of brilliance from Sermano levelled the scores.

About 35 metres out and slightly to the right, Sermano, after seeing nothing was on, fired off a screamer of a shot which hit the underside of the crossbar and bounced in for a goal.

Seven minutes later, Selek was lucky to have received only a yellow card after tripping up Peter Hader with a clear run at goal. The Suns failed to capitalise and the match seemed headed for a draw.

Two minutes before fulltime, Uni received another corner, which Bartone took. He hit a perfect cross into the box which was met in the air by Foxhill, who headed it to the left of Kirkham for the match winner.

University of Canberra coach Tony Brennan said he would have been happy to get a 1-1 draw, but was jubilant with the win.

"I thought we had the better of the first half, and it's good to get the first win on the board," he said.

Suns coach Bill Dojcinoski conceded his team was beaten by a superior performance.

"They deserved to win. They pushed it (the ball) on and ran the whole game, and that was it," he said.

At the other grounds each of the home teams lost. Monaro played a very disciplined game against Burns FC to push past

a 2-2 tie with 25 minutes to go and eventually win 4-2.

At Majura Oval beaten Federation Cup finalists Tuggeranong United scored two goals in the first half before Canberra Olympic came back with two of their own in the second half. Marc Conlon then finished it off in extra-time giving Tuggeranong the win.

Finally at Woden Park a very enthusiastic Weston Creek Royals were just not good enough for League favourites Gungahlin Juventus going down 4-2.

Premier League 1st Grade:

Burns FC 2 Monaro 4, Capital City Suns 1 University of Canberra 2, Belconnen United 5 Canberra Deakin 0, Weston Creek Royals 2 Gungahlin Juventus 4, Canberra Olympic 2 Tuggeranong United 3 Premier League Under 23s: Burns FC 0 Monaro 4, Capital City Suns 0 University of Canberra 2, Belconnen United 3 Canberra Deakin 1, Weston Creek Royals 1 Gungahlin Juventus 1, Canberra Olympic 1 Tuggeranong United 2

Premier League U/19s:

Burns FC 0 Monaro 2, Capital City Suns 1 University of Canberra 2, Belconnen United 2 Canberra Deakin 0, Weston Creek Royals 2 Gungahlin Juventus 4, Canberra Olympic 0 Tuggeranong United 13

Table:

Belconnen United 6, Monaro 6 Gungahlin Juventus 6, Capital City Suns 3, Canberra Deakin 3, University of Canberra 3, Tuggeranong United 3; Canberra Olympic 0, Weston Creek Royals 0, Burns FC 0

Blue Eagles stay top with 5-2 win in SA

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN ROUND-UP

By Donald Campbell and Margaret Bowden

In a round which saw every home team lose, the Blue Eagles retained top spot in the SASF Premier League on Saturday with a 5-2 drubbing of bottom side West Torrens Birkalla.

While Blue Eagles has a formidable squad, Birkalla is rebuilding after losing its entire 1998 championship winning team. Blue Eagles' striker Michael Brooks took his goal tally for the season to 12 as he put three goals past young Manan Kolar.

Despite the three points, coach Zoran Karadzic was upset at conceding two goals for the first time this season!

Underdogs Birkalla scored first, Craig Fewster slotting home a palmed clearance from Gino De Lucia. Brooks promptly tapped in a corner, followed by a Frank Sergi lob over Kolar to make it 2-1 at half time.

Three minutes into the second half Brooks was there again for another close range tap in: 3-1. Birkalla fought back. Rechichi won his one-on-one with De Lucia to stroke the ball into the back of the net: 3-2.

Blue Eagles replied with an inswinging corner kick from Jovan Dacic that went straight past Kolar into the net: 4-2.

With five minutes to play, Brooks claimed his hat trick with a superb lob over Kolar: 5-2.

Birkalla had a chance to pull one back in the last minute. Referee Matthew Cream awarded a penalty, but Fusco skid it over the bar.

Shock of the round came in the Modbury v White City match, favourites Modbury going down 0-1. It was the second win for new 'Warriors' coach Hugo Gimenez, who is slowly dragging the Warriors up the table.

The goal came in the 3rd minute from man of the match Damien Stam. The remaining

87 minutes was contested with outstanding performances from Modbury's Locke, Yates and Dobson, and White City's Anthony Stam, Ferreira and Manca.

Raiders v Elizabeth City saw Elizabeth triumph in the face of adversity. Off the pitch financial turmoil and the prospect of no senior team turning out on Saturday spurred the 'Rams' to a 2-1 victory, leaving a sweet taste in coach Alby Kidd's mouth - he coached Raiders last season!

Elizabeth went 2-0 up in the first half through a Famcombe double. Raiders hit back in the second half. Mark Brazzale found the back of the net, but it wasn't enough to prevent their 6th defeat in a row. Raiders coach Rocky Alosi must be the most frustrated coach in Adelaide.

Talented Croydon went down 0-3 to Port Lion in a coaching battle of mates Phil Scandigno and Michael Barnett.

Dino Sordillo scored twice for Port in the first half, then Steve De Giovanelli plunged the knife deeper into Croydon's heart when he scored Port's third. This was no tame affair, with 5 players cautioned.

The drama began before the game when Mike Barnett relegated three of his better known players to the Port bench for allegedly being 'out on the town' on Friday night.

Bill Missalidis, Peter Mihailopoulos and Joe Calabria might have a bit of trouble getting back into the starting line-up after such a great result!

Newly promoted Metro Stars went down 1-2 to last year's champion Cumberland, who, after a shocking start to the season which saw them on the bottom of the table, are getting their act together.

Metro dominated the first half, with Vince Schimizzi scoring to give them a 1-0 lead at half time. It could have been two if not for the hero-

ics of Cumberland keeper Matt Peace saving a controversial penalty.

Cumberland fought back in the second half Metro kept them in check until the 75th minute when ex-Adelaide City hard man Bradley Armour scored the equaliser. With five minutes to go, Cumberland's imported striker Mirzel Jusofovic worked his magic to make it 2-1 for the visitors.

Adelaide City were hammered 0-3 by Campbelltown City in an Italian derby. Former Adelaide City NSL player David Alberton had an exciting start to his senior refereeing career when he awarded two penalties against his old club!

Other than these two incidents, the game lacked conviction. Campbelltown City put both spot kicks away, then scored a third. Goalscorers were Paul Beltrame, Anthony Perre and Joe Barbaro.

STATE LEAGUE

After seven rounds locked together on equal points, but with Para Hills ahead on goal difference, Olympic went two points clear at the top of the table with an impressive 3-0 win over Cobras while Western Strikers found a chink in the Knights' armour, holding them to a 2-2 draw.

A large crowd turned out for this Greek derby. Olympic gave Cobras no quarter, building on their 2-0 half time lead in the second half.

Even the quick pre-match reshuffle due to the no-show of new signing Mate Maric did not upset Olympic. It was the Tsoukalas brothers who stole the show, scoring the three goals between them. Sasha Ialic, Zelko Bilandzic and Paul Pezon were outstanding for Olympic.

Para Hills Knights' coach Eric Norman literally saw the three points vanish three times in this heated match (7 yellow cards) against in-

form Western Strikers. 2-0 up at half time through Darren Steele and Paul Jones, the Knights looked set to keep top spot, but Strikers' goal sneak George Konstandopoulos scored, then Chris Leonardi sunk the equaliser.

Para stepped on the gas, but hit the post, missed a penalty then had a goal disallowed for offside!

Over 1,000 fans turned out to watch the regional derby between Port Pirie City and Northern Demons, the home side giving them plenty to shout about by staging a second-half come-back to win 3-2.

Salvermini and Fasciano gave the Demons a 2-0 lead at the break, but Port Pirie City hit back through Comieri, Christopoulos and Blazevic.

Salisbury, after a slow start to the season, notched up their fourth consecutive win, beating Adelaide Hills 3-2.

Andy Kay scored a screamer for the Hills to give them a 1-0 lead at the break, then Salisbury equalised through Elliott.

Marshall struck to give the Hills the upper hand, but Robson levelled at 2-2.

The game looked set to end in a draw, but Deeley took advantage of some loose Hills' defending at a corner kick to give the home side victory.

Panthers v Seaford is always a hard fought southern derby, but this time Seaford dominated for their first win of the season 3-1.

Two goals from Huybrechts and one from Paris blunted the Panthers' teeth. Smith scored for the Panthers from a penalty.

Also down south, Noarlunga Bulldogs decimated Enfield 3-0.

Goals from Mark Donk, C. Smith and player coach Gary Price lifted Noarlunga into fifth position.

Super League Summary

Bonnyrigg shrugged aside a tenacious St George to run out 3-1 winners at the Serbian Centre. An early goal to Colin Luff had been cancelled out by Saints defender Simon Verrender before half time and it was only in the last ten minutes that Bonnyrigg put daylight between themselves and a strong opponent with a Luff penalty and yet another goal by Johnny Ghiso.

At The Gabbie, Blacktown failed to hold out a determined Eastern Suburbs who came from two goals down to draw 2-2.

Mark Hagger and Jason Bennet scored a minute apart in the middle of the first half and had the Demons fans hoping for a whitewash.

But a fierce shot from Easts' Jimmy Aschner which Fernando Greco could not hold and merely pushed over the line via defender Damien Foxe's legs gave Easts renewed heart, just before the break.

Easts took the game to Blacktown in a second half, and finally drew level in the 78th

with a Mark Reveley shot and extended the lead through Ben Delicata, before Tony Joseski pulled one back for Bankstown.

Substitute Adam Anderson came on to score the third to put the issue beyond doubt. The last three goals of the game were class strikes and made the game something to remember.

Fairfield Bulls took a very early lead at Pluim Park against Central Coast with a goal from Sal Larocca and withstood a charge from the Coasties for the remainder of the match to hold on for the 1-0 win. Coast have yet to win a match at home this season.

Leichhardt Tigers needed a strike five minutes into stoppage time from Andrew Dowling to defeat a gallant Sutherland 2-1 on Sunday at Lambert Park.

The Sharks led early from a Kris Karanasos goal and it was some time before Steve Karavatis got the Tigers on level terms.

The game developed into a dour struggle for the remainder of the match until Dowling steered in the winner.

Canterbury beat another defiant side, Manly, at Henson Park winning 2-0 with goals from Jim Nikas and newcomer Robert Bustos, the latter reportedly scoring, an absolute

minute after Aschner flicked in a free-kick taken by Yavos Ekinci.

Pennrith spoiled Macarthur's special gala day in front of 1,800 fans at Lynwood Park with a shock 3-0 win.

Danny Hinton put the Panthers a goal up inside 10 minutes and when the Rams' Paul Bentvelzen was sent off in the 22nd minute, Pennrith gradually wore away and netted two more, Hinton and Simon Casserly being their scorers.

Parramatta Eagles defeated a very competitive Bankstown 3-1 at Melita Stadium. The home side went ahead early

"It bounced nicely for me and I smashed it home. They are a great group of players who have made me feel very welcome," said Bustos.

"And with Jimmy Patikas the coaching is excellent."

This was Bustos' second goal in two games for the Berries after a three month layoff following his return from Argentina.

Abbas Saad also played for Canterbury on the weekend after joining from Spirit.



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SATURDAY 15 APRIL

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COASTIES



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WANDERERS

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BOTH TEAMS DESPERATE FOR A WIN

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*FIRST GRADE K.O. 6PM. UNDER 21 K.O. 4PM. UNDER 18 K.O. 2PM
ADULTS \$10 - STUDENT/CONCESSION \$5

WE DON'T CHARGE FOR KIDS UNDER 16 YEARS
COASTIES SEASON TICKETS AVAILABLE AT GATE: \$30

NSW RESULTS

FEDERATION DIVISION ONE: FIRST GRADE: Stanmore Hawks 0, Dulwich Hill 2 (T Pontidas 26m, L Dounis 80m); Fraser Park 0, Hajduk Wanderers 3 (J Boudaher 5m, J Anderson 13m, T Gledhill 50m); Rockdale City Suns 4 (A Adamo 16/31m, P Apolevski 28m, S Naidoski 82m); Illawarra Lions 2 (D Tosevski 81m, D D'Urso 86m); AC United 1 (S Cevenini 44m); Hurstville City Minotaurs 1 (S Kladia 67m); MSC Liverpool 1 (D Dominguez 85m); Auburn United 1 (N Varese 43m); Bathurst 75 3 (S Mutton 15/58/71m); Ryde City Gunners 3 (R Portelli 14/28m, R Butler 35m). **UNDER 21:** Stanmore Hawks 1, Dulwich Hill 1; Fraser Park 1, Hajduk Wanderers 1; Rockdale City Suns 7, Illawarra Lions 2; AC United 4, Hurstville City Minotaurs 0; MSC Liverpool 2, Auburn United 1; Bathurst 75 1, Ryde City Gunners 1. **UNDER 18:** Stanmore Hawks 7, Dulwich Hill 0; Fraser Park 0, Hajduk Wanderers 2; Rockdale City Suns 3, Illawarra Lions 0; AC United 2, Hurstville City Minotaurs 0; MSC Liverpool 7, Auburn United 0; Bathurst 75 1, Ryde City Gunners 5.

FEDERATION DIVISION TWO: FIRST GRADE: University of NSW 0, Sydney University 4; Mt Druitt Town Rangers 2, University of NSW 2; White City 1, Hurstville ZSC 3; Sydney University 4, Hills United 2; Hurstville ZSC 0, Greystanes 1; Belmore Hercules, Mt Druitt Town Rangers Postponed; Central Coast Lakers, Mt Pritchard Washed Out; Sydney District 1, University of NSW 6; White City 6, Hakoah 1. **UNDER 21:** Mt Druitt Town Rangers 2, University Of NSW 0; White City 1, Hurstville ZSC 1; Sydney University 1, Hills United 1; Hurstville ZSC 2, Greystanes 1; Belmore Hercules, Mt Druitt Town Rangers Postponed; Central Coast Lakers, Mt Pritchard Washed Out; Sydney District 1, University of NSW 6; White City 2, Hakoah 2. **UNDER 18:** Mt Druitt Town Rangers 2, University of NSW 0; Sydney University 1, Hills United 2; Hurstville ZSC 4, Greystanes 0; Belmore Hercules 2, Mt Druitt Town Rangers 5; Central Coast Lakers, Mt Pritchard Washed Out; Sydney District 1, University of NSW 1; White City 3, Hakoah 3.

FEDERATION DIVISION THREE: FIRST GRADE: Nepean District 0, Parramatta City 1; Western Sydney Lions 1, The Wanderers 1; Trasandinos 1, Colo Colo 4; Holy Cross Ryde 5, Balmain 2; Prospect United 1, Prairiewood United 3; Camden Tigers 8, Liverpool City 0. **RESERVE GRADE:** Nepean District 2, Parramatta City 0; Western Sydney Lions 2, The Wanderers 0; Trasandinos 1, Colo Colo 8; Holy Cross Ryde 1, Balmain 3; Prospect United 3, Prairiewood United 2; Camden Tigers 5; Liverpool City 1.

FEDERATION DIVISION FOUR: FIRST GRADE: Kellyville Kolts 8, Maroubra United 1; Hawkesbury City 1, CSI Schofields 2; Eastern Creek Pioneers 4, Granville Greenisland 2; United Eagles 5, Sporting SCC 0; Marnckville 0; Sydney Crescent Star 4; Springwood 1, Auburn Star 2. **RESERVE GRADE:** Kellyville Kolts 4; Maroubra United 2; Hawkesbury City 3, CSI Schofields 0; Eastern Creek Pioneers 2; Granville Greenisland 1; United Eagles 0; Sporting SCC 2; Marickville 3; Sydney Crescent Star 2; Springwood 4; Auburn Star 1.

FEDERATION DIVISION FIVE: FIRST GRADE: Western Sydney Passion 2, Kosciusko 5; UTS 0, Bossy 0; Liverpool Olympic 3, Lithgow Workmen 5; Hinchinbrook Juniors 0, Petersham 2; Fairfield City 1, Birrong Sports 1. **RESERVE GRADE:** Western Sydney Passion 3, Kosciusko 4; UTS 0; Bossy 1; Liverpool Olympic 4; Lithgow Workmen 3; Hinchinbrook Juniors 0; Petersham 7; Fairfield City 3, Birrong Sports 1.

WOMENS SUPER LEAGUE: FIRST GRADE: NSW Academy 3, Macarthur Rams 0; Sutherland Sharks 0, Northern NSW/HAS 0; Marconi 8, Gladesville Ravens 0; Central Coast Lakers 3, Manly Warringah Dolphins 1; Nepean Association 2, Wollongong Wolves 1. **GRADE 21:** Sutherland Sharks 1, Northern NSW/HAS 4; Marconi 3, Gladesville Ravens 0; Central Coast Lakers 1, Manly Warringah Dolphins 2; Nepean Association 0, Wollongong Wolves 2.

WOMENS STATE LEAGUE: FIRST GRADE: St George Association 3, Bathurst City 0; Inter Lions 1, UTS 4; CSI Schofields 0; Hajduk Wanderers 21. **GRADE 19:** St George Association 0, Bathurst City 3; Inter Lions 0, UTS 8; CSI Schofields 0; Hajduk Wanderers 10.

SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE: GRADE 13: Leichhardt Tigers 1, Sutherland Sharks 2; Penrith Panthers 4, Fairfield Bulls 3; Manly Warringah Dolphins 4, Eastern Suburbs Wanderers 2; Marconi Stallions 4; Wollongong Wolves 1; Bankstown City 8, Canterbury Marrickville 0; Sydney United 1, Central Coast Coasties 2; Sydney Olympic 0, Newcastle Breakers 1; Northern Spirit 1; Blacktown City Demons 3; Macarthur Rams 4; St George 0; Bonnyrigg White Eagles 1, Parramatta Eagles 6; Blacktown City 2; Macarthur Rams 1. **GRADE 14:** Leichhardt Tigers 3, Sutherland Sharks 0; Penrith Panthers 0, Fairfield Bulls 1; Manly Warringah Dolphins 1, Eastern Suburbs Wanderers 1; Marconi Stallions 1; Wollongong Wolves 2; Bankstown City 5, Canterbury Marrickville 1; Sydney United 1; Central Coast Coasties 0; Sydney Olympic 2, Newcastle Breakers 1; Northern Spirit 1; Blacktown City Demons 0; Macarthur Rams 1; St George 0; Bonnyrigg White Eagles 4; Parramatta Eagles 2; Blacktown City 1; Macarthur Rams 1. **GRADE 15:** Leichhardt Tigers 0, Sutherland Sharks 3; Penrith Panthers 1, Fairfield Bulls 1; Manly Warringah Dolphins 3, Eastern Suburbs Wanderers 0; Marconi Stallions 3; Wollongong Wolves 2; Bankstown City 1, Canterbury Marrickville 0; Sydney United 6, Central Coast Coasties 0; Sydney Olympic 0, Newcastle Breakers 0; Northern Spirit 2; Blacktown City Demons 0; Macarthur Rams 1; St George 0; Bonnyrigg White Eagles 0; Parramatta Eagles 2; Blacktown City 5; Macarthur Rams 0.

DIVISION ONE YOUTH LEAGUE: GRADE 13: Hajduk Wanderers 0, Southern Branch 2; Canterbury Association 0, Blacktown Association 4; Stanmore Hawks 1, Ryde City 4; Mt Pritchard 0, Rockdale City Suns 3; Illawarra Lions 3, AC United 1; Nepean Association 1, Hills United 3; Hajduk Wanderers 3, Mt Pritchard 1; Hills United 1, Blacktown Association 2; Ryde City 1, Southern Branch 3. **GRADE 14:** Hajduk Wanderers 0, Southern Branch 4; Canterbury Association 2, Blacktown Association 3; Stanmore Hawks 0, Ryde City 1; Mt Pritchard 4, Rockdale City Suns 1; Illawarra Lions 2, AC United 0; Nepean Association 0, Hills United 1; Hajduk Wanderers 2, Mt Pritchard 1; Hills United 2, Blacktown Association 1; Ryde City 2, Southern Branch 2. **GRADE 15:** Hajduk Wanderers 1, Southern Branch 0; Canterbury Association 2, Blacktown Association 2; Stanmore Hawks 0, Ryde City 1; Mt Pritchard 3, Rockdale City Suns 0; Illawarra Lions 1, AC United 1; Nepean Association 0, Hills United 0; Hajduk Wanderers 0, Mt Pritchard 1; Hills United 3, Blacktown Association 3; Ryde City 2, Southern Branch 2. **GRADE 16:** Hajduk Wanderers 3, Southern Branch 0; Canterbury Association 0, Blacktown Association 6; Stanmore Hawks 0, Ryde City 0; Mt Pritchard 3, Rockdale City Suns 1; Illawarra Lions 0, AC United 2; Nepean Association 2, Hills United 2; Hajduk Wanderers 2, Mt Pritchard 1; Hills United 1, Blacktown Association 3; Ryde City 0, Southern Branch 0.

DIVISION TWO YOUTH LEAGUE: GRADE 13: Hurstville City Minotaurs 0, Camden Tigers 12; Hawkesbury City 1, Central Coast Lakers 2; Granville Association 1, CSI Schofields 0; Mt Druitt Town Rangers 0, Ku-Ring-Gai Association 0; Parramatta City 2, M.S.C. Liverpool 2; Mt Druitt Town Rangers 0, CSI Schofields 8. **GRADE 14:** Hurstville City Minotaurs 0, Camden Tigers 5; Hawkesbury City 2, Central Coast Lakers 0; Granville Association 1, CSI Schofields 1; Mt Druitt Town Rangers 3, Ku-Ring-Gai Association 1; Parramatta City 1, M.S.C. Liverpool 3; Mt Druitt Town Rangers 1, CSI Schofields 1. **GRADE 15:** Hurstville City Minotaurs 0, Camden Tigers 2; Hawkesbury City 0, Central Coast Lakers 1; Granville Association 3, CSI Schofields 1; Mt Druitt Town Rangers 2, Ku-Ring-Gai Association 1; Parramatta City 1, M.S.C. Liverpool 5; Mt Druitt Town Rangers 4, CSI Schofields 1. **GRADE 16:** Hurstville City Minotaurs 1, Camden Tigers 3; Hawkesbury City 2, Central Coast Lakers 3; Granville Association 0, CSI Schofields 0; Mt Druitt Town Rangers 1, Ku-Ring-Gai Association 0; Parramatta City 3, M.S.C. Liverpool 0; Mt Druitt Town Rangers 0, CSI Schofields 4.

SUPER CADET LEAGUE: GRADE 11: Sydney Olympic 4, St George 0; Leichhardt Tigers 0, Sutherland Sharks 2; Penrith Panthers 5, Fairfield Bulls 0; Manly Warringah Dolphins 3, Eastern Suburbs Wanderers 0; Macarthur Rams 3, St George 1; Bonnyrigg White Eagles 1, Parramatta Eagles 4; Northern Spirit 0; Blacktown City Demons 1; Sydney United 0, Central Coast Coasties 0; Marconi Stallions 1; Wollongong Wolves 1; Canterbury Marrickville 0; Bankstown City Cubs 0. **GRADE 12:** Sydney Olympic 6, St George 0; Leichhardt Tigers 1, Sutherland Sharks 0; Penrith Panthers 5; Fairfield Bulls 1; Manly Warringah Dolphins 8, Eastern Suburbs Wanderers 1; Macarthur Rams 2; St George 1; Bonnyrigg White Eagles 0; Parramatta Eagles 2; Northern Spirit 0; Blacktown City Demons 3; Sydney United 0, Central Coast Coasties 0; Marconi Stallions 4; Wollongong Wolves 0; Canterbury Marrickville 0.

CADET LEAGUE DIVISION ONE: GRADE 11: AC United, CSI Schofields Washed Out; AC United 1, Hurstville City Minotaurs 3, Central Coast Lakers 0, Hills United 3; Hawkesbury City 0, CSI Schofields 4; Stanmore Hawks 1, Illawarra Lions 3; MSC Liverpool 0, Ryde City 4; Rockdale City Suns 3, Mt Druitt Town Rangers 0; Parramatta City 0, Mt Pritchard 0; MDSFA Cadets 3, Hajduk Wanderers 1. **GRADE 12:** AC United, CSI Schofields Washed Out; AC United 3, Hurstville City Minotaurs 2, Central Coast Lakers 2, Hills United 1; Hawkesbury City 0, CSI Schofields 2; Stanmore Hawks 2, Illawarra Lions 2; MSC Liverpool 0, Ryde City 4; Rockdale City Suns 0, Mt Druitt Town Rangers 0; Parramatta City 4, Mt Pritchard 0; MDSFA Cadets 0, Hajduk Wanderers 1.

Bulls win on the road at Central Coast

CENTRAL COAST 0
FAIRFIELD BULLS 1

Larroza 2

Saturday night at Pluim Park, Central Coast



No-one can accuse the Coasties of inconsistency when they play at home at Pluim Park. For the fifth time in the home matches this season the rain came down, the crowd was minimal, they dominated much of the match, they failed to score goals and they lost!

That's three losses and two draws at home this season.

Despite playing without Shane Knight, Peter Preston, Wes Bennett and Adam Peatey and with Paul Roberts on the bench the Coasties actually played as well as they have all season - but oh, those missed chances.

Fairfield started at a fast pace and before the Coasties had settled down a ball into the Coasties penalty area saw Mark Hoenselaars jump high to head a ball which struck Sam Larocca on the side of the head and out of reach of 'keeper Gary Meier, for the first and what turned out to be winning, goal.

Straight from the kick-off the Coasties attacked and a powerful low shot by Cal Roper from outside the penalty area saw Dragan Pupovac make a great save.

Five minutes later Pupovac was again brought into action when Roper made a great run through the middle, found Aron Binskin whose shot on target was deflected for a corner.

The Bulls then counter attacked and a cross field pass found Hoenselaars whose shot went straight across the face of the goal.

Coasties then had their best period of the this match. Stuart Sontag made a good run from half way, beat at least three defenders but when face to face with Pupovac shot into the side of the net from a sharp angle.

Coasties earned a free kick on the edge of the penalty area Nathan Byrn took the kick but shot straight at the wall for an easy clearance.

Sean Matthews made a run, passed to Byrn in a good position but he slipped on the wet grass as he shot and another chance went begging.

Roper then made a run, passed to Matthews but Pupovac was in position for an easy save.

And so it continued until nearly half time when the Bulls broke away, Hoenselaars passed

to Matthew Borg who had his shot from six metres quickly smothered by Meier.

The second half was nearly a repeat of the first half when Hoenselaars got the ball in good position deep inside the Coasties' penalty area but this time shot over the bar.

Ten minutes later Roper had another great shot pushed away by Pupovac with the ball finding Byrn who again put the ball over the bar.

Things started to get a bit heated late in the game with both teams looking for that elusive goal. The Coasties were looking for the equaliser while the Bulls were searching for the second goal to secure the result.

Substitutions were made, cautions handed out to both teams and the referee, Jonathan Streeter, even called both captains together to try and cool things down.

It appeared to work and both teams settled down and again tried to play soccer but by now the pitch was saturated and, despite a last five minutes onslaught by the Coasties, the Bulls held on and took the three points, which moved them further away from the 'cellar dwellers'.

The Coasties must find a goalscorer or their hopes of final five position are out of the window.

CENTRAL COASTIES: Meier, Matthews, Steele, Drysdale, Daly, Byrn (Leary), Binskin (Roberts), Roper, Anderson (Marshall), Ritchie, Sontag.

FAIRFIELD BULLS: Pupovac, Crometti, Treharn, Larreca, Zabetakis, Bourke, Hoenselaars (Nikolic), Borg, Iocca, Omac (Cavalloro), Huseyin.

Meanwhile at Gabbie Stadium the improving Easts showed considerable character to come back from two goals down to draw 2-2 with Super League powerhouse Blacktown City Demons.

Once again Mark 'Hitman' Hagger scored for City, and with Jason Bennett adding a second early in the first half, it looked like curtains for the visitors.

However in the 35th minute Jim Aschner's shot hit Damien Foxe and it went in. And 12 minutes from time Yavuz Ekinci's low shot took a touch off Aschner bringing Easts level at 2-2.

The loss of points meant Blacktown dropped to second behind Bonnyrigg, while Easts moved comfortably into a mid-table spot in striking distance of the finals.

Super League Tables

FIRST GRADE:	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	GD
BONNYRIGG W. EAGLES	13	9	0	4	37	25	27	12
Blacktown City Demons	13	8	2	3	40	13	26	27
Leichhardt Tigers	12	8	2	2	31	16	26	15
Parramatta Eagles	13	6	5	2	31	21	10	10
St George Saints	13	7	2	4	25	20	23	5
Canterbury Marrickville	14	7	0	7	24	31	21	-7
Bankstown City Lions	14	5	4	5	22	21	19	1
Central Coast Coasties	13	5	3	5	21	19	18	2
Eastern Suburbs	13	5	1	7	24	26	16	-2
Fairfield Bulls	13	4	3	6	20	22	15	-2
Macarthur Rams	13	3	5	5	17	21	14	-4
Penrith Panthers	12	3	1	8	11	31	10	-20
Sutherland Sharks	13	3	1	9	15	37	10	-22
Manly Warringah Dolphins	13	2	3	8	14	29	9	-15

UNDER 21	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS	GD
BLACKTOWN CITY	13	8	3	2	31	17	27	14
Central Coast Coasties	13	8	2	3	22	14	26	8
Penrith Panthers	12	8	1	3	27	19	25	8
Parramatta Eagles	14	6	3	5	22	17	21	5
Leichhardt Tigers	12	6	2	4	25	18	20	7
Manly Warringah Dolphins	13	6	1	6	28	26	19	2
Macarthur Rams	13	6	1	6	20	23	19	-3
Sutherland Sharks	14	4	5	5	21	27	17	-6
St George Saints	13	4	4	5	23	22	16	1
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	13	3	5	5	19	22	14	-3
Eastern Suburbs	13	3	5	5	18	26	14	-8
Canterbury Marrickville	14	4	2	8	22	32	14	-10
Bankstown City Lions	14	3	3	8	28	33	12	-5
Fairfield Bulls	13	3	3	7	16	26	12	-10

UNDER 18	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	GD
PARRAMATTA EAGLES	14	10*	1	3	39	19	31	20
Fairfield Bulls	13	10	0	3	29	17	30	12
Blacktown City Demons	13	8	4	1	24	10	28	14
Leichhardt Tigers	12	7	2	3	30	20	23	10
Central Coast Coasties	13	6	2	5	29	19	20	10
Macarthur Rams	13	5	5	3	20	18	20	2
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	13	5	3	5	17	19	18	-2
Bankstown City Lions	14	5	3	6	24	28	18	-4
Penrith Panthers	12	4	5	3	20	13	17	7
Sutherland Sharks	14	4	4	6	20	21	16	-1
Eastern Suburbs	13	3	5	5	20	28	14	-8
St George Saints	13	2	4	7	16	39	10	-23
Manly Warringah Dolphins	13	2	1	10	13	21	7	-8
Canterbury Marrickville	14	0	3	11	11	40	3	-29

SUPER LEAGUE

ROUND FIFTEEN

Saturday 15 April

Central Coast Coasties v Eastern Suburbs - Pluim Park

Games 6.00pm (1st grade) - 4.00pm (21s) - 2.00pm (18s)

Sunday 16 April

St George Saints v Macarthur Rams - St George Stadium

Leichhardt Tigers v Bonnyrigg W. Eagles - Lambert Park

Penrith Panthers v Canterbury M'kville - Andrews Road

Manly W'gah Dolphins v P'matta Eagles - Cromer Park

Bankstown City v Blacktown City - Jensen Park

Fairfield Bulls v Sutherland Sharks - Nineveh Field

All Games 3.00pm (1st grade)-1.00pm (21s)-11.00pm (18s).

Catch all the latest news on football in NSW in **Super Soccer OUT** 13 April

www.soccernsw.com.au

FIRST GRADE: SUPER LEAGUE	
BLACKTOWN CITY DEMONS 2	
M Heggar 20m, J Bennett 22m.	
EASTERN SUBURBS WANDERERS 2	
own goal 31m, J Aschner 78m.	
CENTRAL COAST COASTIES 0	
FAIRFIELD BULLS 1	
S Larocca 2m.	
BONNYRIGG WHITE EAGLES 3	
C Luff 25m, Penalty 90m, own goal 92m.	
ST GEORGE SAINTS 1	
S Verrender 34m	
MACARTHUR RAMS 0	
PENRITH PANTHERS 3	
D Hinton 10/51m, S Casserly 61m	
PARRAMATTA EAGLES 3	
M Revezley 32m, B Delicata 35m, A Anderson 88m.	
BANKSTOWN CITY LIONS 1	
T Joseski.	
CANTERBURY MARRICKVILLE BERRIES 2	
J Nikas 19m, R Bustos 82m	
MANLY WARRINGAH DOLPHINS 0	
LEICHHARDT TIGERS 8 2	
S Karavataki 48m, A Dowling 95m.	
SUTHERLAND SHARKS 1	
K Karanacos 28m.	
UNDER 21:	
Blacktown City 5	
Central Coast 4	
Bonnyrigg W. Eagles 3	
Macarthur Rams 0	
Eastern Suburbs 0	
Fairfield Bulls 0	
St George Saints 1	
Penrith Panthers 1	

Charles Farrugia

Green Gully is a club for everyone: Part two

By Markian Jaworsky

MJ: This is not an ethnic club?
CF: No, no we are for all of the community. We encourage the parents of all our junior players, to purchase a membership.

In fact it is virtually demanded of them, that if you bring your child to play in any of our twenty teams, that you become a member, pay a membership fee, and become involved with the setup at the club by voting on club issues and attending the senior team matches.

Ultimately, eventually, they will become the future of the club. This is a necessity for the club.

MJ: Has the recent success of Green Gully on the field, increased the numbers of players in the youth teams?

CF: The youth participation of Green Gully is great. We could increase our participation but we simply do not have the room for any more teams. When you have 20 teams, you only have so much time and grounds to train on during the week. From 5:00pm to 9:00pm Monday to Friday, we are booked out with training.

MJ: What teams do you have?

CF: We start from under 8's, and go up to under 18's. As well as the senior and ladies teams.

MJ: What is the policy regarding team selection for the youth teams?

CF: We begin with a selection period of 3-4 weeks, where the coach will select a squad of 16 players.

From there we encourage coaches to rotate the team around, but we leave it with the coach. Some coaches do rotate, others stick with the same eleven week in week out.

Parents want the best of both worlds, if the team is not winning, they don't like the coach, if their child is not playing enough or learning enough they don't like the coach, they can't have it both ways. We have a list of three priorities.

One. To keep the team together and complete the season.

Two. To teach the players.

Three. If the team wins the league then that is a great bonus. Winning is definitely not everything. Every year we preach this.

Every year we push this, it is a very frustrating thing with so many people wanting their own way. It is a catch 22 situation.

MJ: Crowd attendance is actually down this season having gone back to Sunday night fixtures from the Monday night games of last season?

CF: The attendance is slightly down.

MJ: Will the club go back to Monday night fixtures? Next season?

CF: Definitely not this season. We do not know what our fixtures will be like next season. Monday night fixtures are very hectic, with many of the players having work commitments at the same time.

And the idea of having the juniors play on a different day for visiting clubs has not been accepted well.

MJ: Do you believe that there should be an NSL second division?

CF: I believe that there should be a process of promotion and relegation. How that is achieved



Charles Farrugia: Green Gully President.



is up to Soccer Australia.

If a Second division can be financially supported and the clubs well sponsored, and we do not have any more situations like the Adelaide Sharks, yes. But there doesn't have to be a second division for the sake of promotion and relegation.

It is promotion and relegation that is the most important ingredient.

When you look at Altona Magic, who won the Victorian championship three years running, they had nowhere to go, and eventually started questioning their own motives of success.

That is a terrible situation for soccer in Australia to be in.

MJ: Are you aware of any proposals to the clubs for a second division from Soccer Australia?

CF: I am aware that there will be a second division, next season.

MJ: What would you say to people who are of the opinion that Green Gully had its chance in the National League, failed and should stay in the Victorian Premier League?

CF: What you have to take into account is that the NSL had a very

different structure back then. It was split into northern and southern sections.

The NSL was then restructured, and we were pushed down with some other clubs, and the club at the time felt fed up and didn't fight the move. We have learnt, we have to be more careful and aware of the financial difficulties in playing in a national competition.

The way that we can do this is if the sponsors play a big role in the finance of the company, and for the players and agents to understand the financial difficulties and to not be greedy when in contractual discussions.

The gate takings are not there at the present moment and the club can only do so much.

MJ: Down the track, if Green Gully successfully entered an NSL second division, and attendance did grow satisfactorily, would there be plans of development at the ground?

CF: We have plans for a undercover seating at the ground. It's not going to happen next season, but sometime in the next five years.

If for criteria reasons we had to move grounds until development took place, then we would consider all of our options and present it to the members of the club to make a decision.

Phoenix rises as Gully's run finally ends

By Markian Jaworsky

GREEN GULLY 0 ALTONA EAST 2

Groidis, Dimitrolos.

Sunday night at Green Gully Reserve, Kealba

Crowd: 600.

For the first eight rounds of the season, Green Gully demanded the respect of its peers, with an record equaling eight straight victories.

All good things come to an end. For many of those victories, Gully's opponents had given too much respect.

As most teams begin to swing into gear, it is Green Gully that each team now wants to gun down, and to do that they need the hunger and the confidence to do so.

The only way Green Gully will be beaten will be from teams who will pressure, closing down them down in simple but strict man-to-man marking.

That is exactly what Altona East did to Green Gully, with Altona defender Ross Antoniadis leading by example.

John Dimitrelos, the Altona East defender with the deadly right foot kick, started Altona East in action.

His 25 yard effort forced Gully's Robert Brian into a knock over the bar save.

From the next two resulting corners Altona's Robert Troise smacked in his half-volley on the edge of the area just wide.

After 18 minutes, the match had its first taste of controversy. George Sigos setup Nikolas Papadopoulos, who shot the ball in past the back post.

As Green Gully celebrated referee Carlo Graser called Papadopoulos back, handing the first yellow card for the evening.

The referee's assistant had not flagged offside.

The biggest controversy however came after 35 minutes.

Altona's Peter Groidis made a late challenge on Gully's Steven Mangos which resulted in immediate calls for an ambulance to attend to Mangos' broken ankle.

In the resulting scuffle it appeared as though Groidis and others actually came to blows, unnoticed by referee Carlo Graser, who spent most of the night punishing players for tedious infringements.

Graser opted only for a yellow

card towards Groidis for his late challenge, a decision that infuriated the Green Gully players and supporters alike.

Just before halftime, Green Gully failed to clear a cross which was knocked on for Peter Groidis to volley Altona East into a deserved lead.

The second half started much like the first, five minutes in Peter Groidis the tormentor of Green Gully robbed Steven Douglas, only to shoot narrowly over the crossbar.

Green Gully only got into the game midway through the second half.

Sonny Sevin found space on the right wing and combined well with Papadopoulos to create some close calls on the Altona goal.

However, Altona East once again got on top by closing down Green Gully and on 73 minutes, Robert Troise, dribbled three Green Gully players to make his way into the penalty area and force Robert Brian into a quick reflex save.

Just before the final whistle, just as he started the match John Dimitrelos lined up a 25 yard shot and this time it took a minor deflection, totally wrong-footing Brian, and hitting the back of the net.

2-0 to Altona East. The Cavaliers' run had finally ended.

GREEN GULLY: Brian Douglas, Georgiadis, Mangos(Spiteri 35), Kutlesovski(Neceski 67), Markovski, Sigos(Velkovski 72), Vassallo, Sevin, Papadopoulos, Bevincovski.

ALTONA EAST: Frangos, Antoniadis, Valentic, DeAmicis, Dimitrelos, Troise, Donnelly, Antoniadis, Groidis(Davis 80), Bartol, Papadopoulos.

Referee: Carlo Graser.

Yellow:
Green Gully: Papadopoulos 18, Georgiadis 42, Sigos 43, Douglas 65.
Fawkner: Donnelly 44, Antoniadis 78.

MAN OF THE MATCH:

3. ROSS ANTONIADIS (ALTONA EAST)
2. Robert Troise (Altona East)
1. John Dimitrelos (Altona East)

Perfect Preston's away win at Port

**PORTE MELBOURNE 0
PRESTON LIONS 1**

Panev 39.

Saturday evening at
SS Anderson Reserve, Melbourne



By Mark Fisher

Preston effected a textbook away victory over Port Melbourne on Saturday night. They threw everything at the Sharks in the first half, nailed the all-important goal shortly before the break, and then defended in numbers throughout the second forty-five minutes of play.

Vlado Petkoski was almost untouchable in midfield, and worked hard to re-propel his side forward time and time again.

His efforts were aided by a robust back line, which looked fairly comfortable against the likes of a tired-looking Sharks midfield and an attack that lacked inspiration and innovation.

John Sapazovski continued his good run of form with another outstanding performance in attack for Preston.

In a first half that lacked fizz until the goal was scored, Sapazovski at least made the most of some space in the centre.

His swift shot on the turn in the seventh minute forced goalkeeper Tony Lyras to pull out a clever low trapping save.

Port on the other hand looked very flat, and were largely unable to thread the ball through Preston's defensive line. Damon Collina and Nick Tsaltas received very little of the ball early, which was partly a product of how protective the Lions were of their superiority in possession terms.

Sapazovski had a hand in the lone goal of the game, when he put the ball into space for Dimce Panev to collect on the forward edge of the area.

Panev calmly moved inside of defender Richard Watson, and drilled the

ball well past the outstretched right arm of Lyras to deservedly give Preston the lead, in the 39th minute.

Panev almost made it 0-2 just two minutes later, after pocket speedster Saso Slaveski motored down the right wing and sent an outswinging cross which asked to be met at the far post.

Panev arrived on the scene a fraction of a second late, evoking sighs of relief from the home crowd.

The second half saw Preston consolidate their grip on the game, with only a late penalty inside the area looking like earning the Sharks a point.

The goalscoring hero Panev could have undone all his good work when he handled the ball as Port made a rare incursion near goal.

Up stepped out of sorts striker Collina in the 76th minute to take the shot. He pushed it low and a metre inside the right post, only for 200 cm tall George Tsianakas to meet it with a superb parrying save to his right.

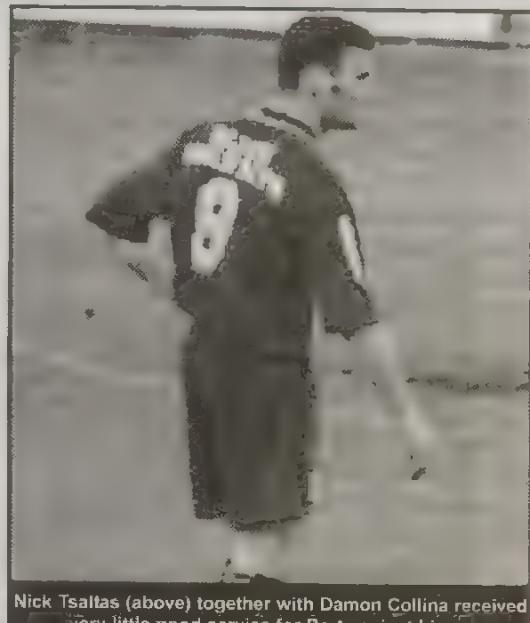
Collina crumpled in disbelief.

At the other end Josifovski slipped wide and to the left of the area in order to evade Tony Lyras as the 'keeper sprinted off his line. With a seemingly open net available, he tapped at goal from a sharp angle.

Watson saved Port from further embarrassment by getting back to clear the ball off the goal line as Lyras looked on.

Preston made a safe late substitution, which allowed Chris Sterjovski (a striker) play out the game in defence in order to cover the loss of the injured Zoran Drogriski.

Preston held onto their lead and overall were by far the better team on the night. They now reside in a mid-table position almost half way into the



Nick Tsaltas (above) together with Damon Collina received very little good service for Port against Lions.

2000 VPL season, whereas Port have begun a slide that must be a source of serious concern at Anderson Reserve.

PORT MELBOURNE: Lyras, Palamaras, Sonsini, Watson, Pappas, Poutakidis, Knezevic, Mustafa, Mihajlovic (Nicolic), Collina (Tsoulakis), Tsaltas

PRESTON LIONS: Tsianakas, Ognenovski, Bolevski, Drogriski (Sterjovski), Petkoski, Everett, Slaveski, Kovacic, Kozic (Josifovski), Panev, Sapazovski

BEST PLAYERS:

- 3 - PETKOSKI (PRESTON)
- 2 - DROGRISKI (PRESTON)
- 1 - SAPAZOVSKI (PRESTON)

VPL RESULTS FIRST GRADE

OAKLEIGH CANNONS 2
Calamino, Nalpantids.

BENTLEIGH GREENS 3
Breslin, Markovski.

PORT MELBOURNE SHARKS 0

PRESTON LIONS 1

Panev.

ALTONA MAGIC 2

Nicevski, Jolevski.

BULLEEN ZEBRAS 1

Catalano

ST ALBANS SAINTS 3

Urlović (2), Dragicevic

HEIDELBERG UNITED 1

Opazo

GREEN GULLY CAVALIERS 0
ALTONA EAST PHOENIX 2

Groidis, Dimitrellos.

RESERVES:

Oakleigh 2 B'tleigh Greens 3

Port Melbourne 0 Preston Lions 1

Altona Magic 3 Bulleen Zebras 2

St Albans 3 Heidelberg U'td 2

Green Gully 4 Altona East 1

PLAYED MONDAY NIGHT:

Melbourne Raiders v Fawkner Blues

FIRST GRADE

GREEN GULLY CAVALIERS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Bentleigh Greens	10	8	1	1	24	7	25
Altona Magic	10	6	2	2	19	11	20
St Albans Saints	10	4	4	2	13	13	16
Altona East Phoenix	10	4	3	3	18	13	15
Preston Lions	10	4	3	3	10	10	15
Oakleigh Cannons	10	3	3	4	12	14	12
Port Melb. Sharks	10	3	3	4	16	19	12
Bulleen Zebras	10	3	2	5	15	19	11
Melbourne Raiders	9	2	4	3	10	11	10
Fawkner Blues	9	2	2	5	9	15	8
Heidelberg United	10	2	1	7	13	23	7

RESERVES

BENTLEIGH GREENS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Green Gully Cav	10	8	0	2	37	13	24
St Albans Saints	10	7	2	1	36	10	23
Port Melbourne Sharks	10	4	5	1	22	18	17
Preston Lions	10	4	3	3	20	19	15
Altona East Phoenix	10	3	5	2	25	19	14
Altona Magic	10	4	2	4	15	19	14
Fawkner Blues	10	4	2	4	22	28	14
Bulleen Zebras	9	3	1	5	19	26	10
Melbourne Raiders	10	2	3	4	24	24	9
Heidelberg United	9	2	3	4	18	29	9
Oakleigh Cannons	10	1	3	6	12	29	6
	10	1	3	6	9	26	6

VICTORIAN PREMIER LEAGUE

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ROUND ELEVEN

Sunday 16 April

Fawkner Blues v Preston Lions - CB Smith Reserve

3.00(First Grade)/1.00(Reserves)

Altona East Phoenix v Port Melbourne Sharks - Paisley Reserve

3.00(First Grade)/1.00(Reserves)

Bentleigh Greens v Green Gully Cavaliers - Kingston SC

3.00(First Grade)/1.00 (Reserves)

Bulleen Zebras v Oakleigh Cannons - Veneto Club

3.00(First Grade)/1.00(Reserves)

Monday 17 April

Heidelberg United v Altona Magic - Olympic Village

8.15(First Grade)/6.15Reserves)

Melbourne Raiders v St Albans Saints - Epping SS

8.15(First Grade)/6.15(Reserves)

Green Gully by a mile ... unless

Kevin Christopher reviews the early season form in the Victorian Premier League and starts to wonder if the VSF need to inject some life into the battle for the championship...

Okey, it's time to let the cat out of the bag - the Victorian Premier League 2000 season has started. Given the amount of media coverage the league has obtained thus far, one could be excused for thinking that things couldn't get much worse.

Oh yes they could...In fact increased media coverage could be the worst thing for the league right now.

Get this. We're eight rounds into a 22 round season and the league management committee haven't even decided if there will be finals yet. No, we're not kidding. Remember, this is Victoria - by name and nature.

The problem stems from the barnstorming start to the season by Green Gully (top right). The Cavaliers notched eight straight wins before conceding a late equaliser at Preston, yet they have already stretched their lead to eight points and few teams look capable of reducing the gap.

Thoughts of closing it can be dismissed altogether, so naturally the Cavs are keen to retain the 'first post the post' system used last season. Twenty four goals from ten different sources is an indication of the firepower available to the front-runners while the defence remains amongst the most reliable in the league.

In other words, this may be the most boring championship race in living memory. One is tempted to recall the exploits of Port Melbourne in 1995 when they won the minor premiership by a massive twenty-two points with a 22-3-1 record. Incredibly, they went out of the finals in straight sets and Altona Magic played Buleen in the grand final.

It is somewhat ironic then that one club which will be pushing for a finals series is last season's runner-up, Port Melbourne. After pushing Green Gully all the way to the wire last term, the Sharks have struggled to make an impact thus far this season and their defensive frailties were on full display during a thrilling 3-3 draw at newly-promoted Oakleigh. The home side also hit the bar three times and four Sharks were booked in a performance which suggests they will struggle at the back without the reliable Rody Vargas (Knights) and up front without the prolific Peter Kakos (Falcons).

Coach Peter Tsolakis can still call on the services of Nick Tsaltas and John Pappas up front, but it is at the other end that surgery may be required. Unless the likes of John-Paul Knezevic, Nick Palamaras and new goalkeeper Chris Roche can tighten up at the back, the Sharks will be hoping the possible finals aren't just restricted to the top four or five. As for Tsolakis, well, there have already been rumblings of discontent at committee level so, as they say, watch this space.

But at least Port still have the coach they started the season with, which is more

than can be said about Heidelberg, Buleen and Bentleigh. All three clubs had lofty ambitions for the year but after failing to secure early wins the honchos at Heidelberg and Buleen reached for the axe.

Certainly the most important change was at Bentleigh, where Harry Chalkitis was shunted aside for Gary Cole, who tasted success in the nineties with both Altona Magic and Buleen. No real surprise there, with veteran club-hopper Millissa Fischer-Massa being a long-time admirer of Mr Cole's abilities, having a first-hand view of his work at Altona Magic. Welcome back Gary, the Premier League wouldn't be the same without you!

The squad contains many of last year's elements including reliable 'keeper Glenn Clarke, key defenders Theo Constantinou, Tom Karapatsos and attacking full back Harry Micheil, although the suspicion the defence is less than watertight lingers on. The Greens are great value at the other end though, even if the goals of Juan Nilo will be sorely missed. Sash Markovski (below left) continues to be a genuine danger up front however, and if Doug Mladenovic, Will Hastie and David Breslin can produce consistent years then the Greens will remain the team most likely to pounce should the leaders slip up.

Meanwhile up at Heidelberg, Jim Pyrgolios paid the price for some dodgy results with the club in trouble both on and on the ground. Yes, on and on. Not only were they getting beaten on the park but their home ground was also in strife thanks to a remarkable sequence of events, beginning with an unusually high worm density, which in turn led to crows making a mess of the ground. Enter the council for some re-seeding, enter more birds to feed on the seed.

It didn't get much better on the park, either. Opening with successive defeats against newly-promoted Oakleigh and reigning champions Green Gully, the Bergers rebounded spectacularly with a 4-1 thumping of Port Melbourne with Opazo notching a hat-trick.

However further defeats at the hands of Fawkner and Preston spelt the end for Pyrgolios, with Carlton youth coach Jeff Olver getting the nod. No real surprise there either, with Olver having a lengthy distinguished career with the Bergers and proving himself a more than capable coach of youth at Carlton. Olver plans to combine the duties of both jobs, but it's hard to see the Bergers committee accepting that arrangement if the club remains in the bottom four.

The national youth league only has a couple of months remaining, but results at Heidelberg will need to improve in the meantime. The goals of Alfonso Opazo will be crucial, and the ex-Sunshine player has started in fine form but the spree will need to continue because elsewhere things aren't so productive.

Less straightforward in the coaching capers were events at Buleen, where a dressing-room altercation between coach Alan Davidson and captain Danny Gnjidic led to some dirty laundry getting hung out. Although Davo's version of events is slightly different to the committee's, the end result is that he is free to concentrate on his C7 commentary commitments.

The straight-talker was keen to point the finger at off-season recruits Costa Kaimakamis (from Port Melb) and Chris Emsovski (Preston) and equally keen to hold



up his hand as well. But when you're leaking two goals a game it's tough to pick up points and one win from seven matches was a just penalty for their defensive abnormalities.

The squad contains plenty of names and experience but what may be needed at the Veneto Club is a serious injection of youth and enthusiasm. That may come in the form of new coach Joe Mullen (yep, the Adelaide City legend) and if he can find a way to motivate the likes of Warren Spink, Vlad Babic and Sava Rasmir then Buleen may well find their way back into mid-table. But he'll really need to tighten up that defence first.

Another ex-Socceroo Micky Petersen is having a far better better time of it over the other side of town at St Albans. After losing the 1998 grand final to Buleen under Vlado Vanis, the Saints suffered a hangover when Vanis left for Preston, and it was left to Vid Horvat to steer the club to mid-table safety.

Petersen has built on that work and produced a team capable of matching it with most, although their lack of depth was evident when going down 1-2 at home to Bentleigh.

Joe Cuze retains a formidable presence at the back while Damien Vojtek, Kon Sianidis and Ivan Razov should provide enough firepower and invention to raise hopes of a top six finish. Carlton fans may also wish to note that Denis Ekeci (right) and Ivica Klarica are running around with the Saints while Knights fans probably already know about Matt Urlovic, brother of Paul.

Elsewhere in the western suburbs, Altona neighbours Magic and East will be more than nuisance value again this season although injuries to key players will be crucial if a relegation battle is to be avoided. Magic may have won the 'derby' 1-0, but lost their president who resigned prior to the match, and with the squad lacking the quality and depth of previous seasons a mid-table place is probably their best hope. Darren McGrath is still between the posts so nobody is likely to likely to hammer them, and in Zoran Todorovski they have the man 'most likely to...'. But the likes of John Sapazovski, John Cvetanovski and Deni Lislajski will need to have huge seasons if the Magic are to trouble the frontrunners.

Altona East did well to finish above the drop zone last season and even managed to finish above their illustrious neighbours. Peter Ollerton is a shrewd coach and it may be too early to suggest the Phoenix will fall toward the relegation zone again, but they

really need to do something about their current goal drought. It will take a mighty effort from George Angelos and Nick Papadopoulos if East are to stay out of trouble, but keep an eye out for Steven Bartol, Peter Groidis and Bill Petrovski, who are all

capable of tucking the ball away.

Up in the northern suburbs it also looks like a year of mediocrity with Fawkner, Preston and Melbourne Raiders all failing to capture the imagination with their pre-season bartering. The Raiders have snapped up Lance Plunkett (Melbourne Knights), David Della Rocca and David Grbac, while Preston have lured ex-Carlton striker Alex Josifovski to Connor Reserve, but generally there is little to excite. The fact that only Preston finished in the top three last season would suggest the improvement is expected to come from within amongst the other clubs, with Melbourne Raiders the most likely to set out after the leaders. Jim Gacovski (Springvale White Eagles) could prove to be a useful pick-up for the club but the two Nicks, Cuculevski and Lazarevski will be expected to lead the way, along with ex-Olyroo George Slifkas.

Down south, Oakleigh have defied the critics by forcing their way into the top half of the table, with player-coach Ike Alagizidis, a former Gold Medal winner, combining with Bill Nalpantidis to form a lethal attack. The defence remains iffy, but good crowds at Jack Edwards Reserve are being treated to some great football on Friday nights, and one can only hope the Cannons are rewarded for their entertaining approach with mid-table safety, even if the title is light years away.

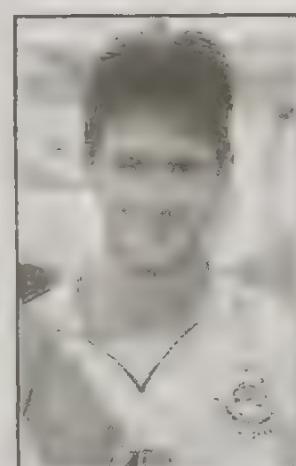
Which just leaves Green Gully, who are odds on to make it back-to-back titles minor championships after a blistering start which has seen them win their first eight matches.

Coach Ian Dobson retains the Midas touch and with over a dozen players with NSL experience, the Cavaliers are destined to leave the other clubs in their wake. Zoran Markovski, Steve Douglas, Steve Mangos, Brandon Vassallo, Sash Becvinovski, Sonny Sevin, Ice Kutlesovski, should we go on?

Yes we should, by mentioning Zdravko Atanasovski, the living talisman who is chasing his SIXTH successive Premier League winners medal after tasting success with Altona Magic, Buleen and last year with Green Gully.

Motivation would appear to be the only factor capable of upsetting the Cavs this season, and with the national league second division now on hold, there seems little incentive for other clubs to break into the piggy bank before the end of the year. It all adds up to a meandering sort of season, with virtually all the interest centering around who is likely to be relegated.

Perhaps the VSF can inject a bit of life into proceedings by announcing that there will be a finals series. As tough as that would be on Green Gully, it would at least ensure the championship race will still be alive when the NSL finishes.





IVAN ZELIC

Force's model NSL player speaks with Daniela

Ivan, you were recently voted one of Cleo's 50 most eligible bachelors. Are you the clean-cut, wholesome, eloquent young man you would like us to believe, or have I totally missed the mark?

I am definitely not clean-cut and wholesome, but at the same time when there is a job to be done I focus 120% and do it. I have a social life away from the track, so things are not monotonous.

In your Cleo interview we learn that you can do amazing things with rose petals, that you tend to bite, you sleep on a waterbed, and that you keep a box next to your bedside table that has everything in it. Ivan, I'm curious ..what's in the 'box'.

Anything that you can think of!

You pose on a cosy bed, in bare skin, with only the cover of a bed sheet that is every strategically placed. Were you comfortable doing the shoot?

Yes, I had no problem at all. I felt relaxed and got along well with everyone. There were three guys before me, so I got a feel for what was happening.

Earlier on in the season Vilson Knezevic predicted that if there was a member of your squad that would top Cleo's most eligible bachelor list, it would be you. Perhaps this is an omen of things to come?

It's nice that he said that, and to be part of it.

You also seem keen to carve out your name in the modeling world.

I'm in some of this country's major magazines at the moment, doing ads for Mitsubishi Lancer, Harris Scarf etc. I want to carve my own identity. Over the years, because of my name, people have always referred to my brother's career - I want to leave my own impression.

What is it about soccer that you love the most?

No matter what is happening in your life, you can get on the field and score a goal. As a kid everyone has dreams of scoring a goal for Liverpool. You also from many lasting friendships through soccer.

What are some of your sort and long term goals?

To make the Olympics, and for Adelaide to make the finals and win. In the long term, I wish to pursue my modeling further and be picked up to do catwalks in Milan.

Do you have aspirations to break into European football?

That is everyone's aspiration. But, I don't like it people set time limits. Everyone peaks at a different time. In Australia we take a lot of things for granted. When I was in

camp in Tunisia, I saw how many of our overseas based players were unhappy for different reasons, whether this be the weather etc.

What does the chance to play for the Olyroos mean to you?

Everything and anything. I want to be at the Olympics in Sydney in 2000.

What are the qualities of a good coach?

He must be a good communicator with players and have empathy with players. If someone is not training well, perhaps it has to do with their social life.

In one word describe Zoran Matic.

The Man? Honest.
The Coach? Eloquent.

What are some of Ivan Zelic's off-field pastimes?

Apart from modeling, socialising and spending money on good clothes.

In an interview with Matthew Kemp, your house-mate, he tells me that your choice in videos leaves a lot to be desired: 'The Wish Master'?

What would he know! He is lazy and a sloth. He refuses to walk 20 metres to pick up the phone.

Which famous person have you been told you look like?

I always get that. People always say I look like someone ... but they don't tell me who!

If you could have box seats at any event in the world, what would it be?

Front row to watch Nirvana live when Kurt Cobain was at his peak.

If you were to star in a Hollywood movie who would be your leading lady?

Mila Jovovich.

Which member of your squad is most likely to be caught dancing on a podium at a night-club?

Bradley Hassell, the instigator of Karaoke.

On interstate trips which team-mate do you refuse to share a room with?

Nick Sabljak, because he has strong political views.

Which member of your squad has the best set of wheels?

Zoran Matic - he owns a Merc.

Who has the most unusual nickname in the team?

Nathan Day - 'G', for G'day.

Carl Veart - Damian Mori calls him 'Scruff'.

Do you know of any pre-match mishaps (missing players, two left boots, etc)?

Players walking on the pitch with Sorbent toilet paper rolled into their shin pads.

You were born and raised in

Canberra (with Knights' Zeljko Susa), you've spent some time in Sydney, and have now made a move across to the city of churches - but where do you call home?

Definitely Canberra. Zeljko is actually my cousin. Growing up we played for the same clubs - Deakin and at the Institute. We have now gone our separate ways to follow our own careers. I appreciate him both as a person and as a player.

Which team-mate is likely to walk past Hungry Jacks and feel compelled to walk in?

The title belonged to 'Knesa' (Vilson Knezevic, who is now overseas) but now the title remains unclaimed.

What is the biggest misconception about sportsmen?

That they're arrogant and put themselves above everyone else.

What is your pet hate?

People that put me on hold when I'm on the phone - I always hang up.

Complete the sentence 'Love is...' ... what you make of it.

What would you consider to be a romantic night out?

A nice bottle of wine, with a blanket on the beach looking at the stars - the wine helps to unwind.

Has this ever been played out?

No, unfortunately it hasn't.

What is your most cherished possession?

My health.

What cuisine can you whip in the kitchen?

Cheese on toast, crumpets... Actually 'Kempi' will vouch I cook a mean steak!

If you could have any supernatural power what would it be?

To be able to read people's minds.

Do you have any hidden talents?

I write a lot of poetry.

What would you spend your last \$50 on?

Videos ('Wish Master'), a tub of ice-cream and some chocolate.

The 'goings-on' at end of season trips and interstate outing seem to form part of a 'secret men's club' that is never to be mentioned, and certainly never spoken about. Ivan, can you shed some light on what goes on during times of male bonding?

Tears, confessions, and group hugs!

Ivan, good luck for the Cleo Bachelor of the Year Award this Friday night in Sydney.

Home and hosed? Think again!

CENTRAL COAST



In all sports it is expected that teams playing at home, before their own supporters without the chore of travelling to the opposition ground, would naturally perform better.

Somebody forgot to tell the Central Coast Coasties this theory. So far this season they have played four games at home and eight away. Their home record is two draws, three losses and no wins. But in eight away games away from home they had five wins, one draw and two losses.

In the 1999 Super League season they played eleven games at home for two wins, three draws and six losses.

The 1998 season was not much better.

This season they were leading the competition after five away games in a row, went back to Pluim Park and have since gradually slipped down the table to seventh place.

Where is the problem? They are arguably the best supported team in the competition, the playing surface at Pluim Park is equal to any in the Super League and the this season the club is performing well in all three grades with the players' morale as high as could be expected.

Is there some type of witch-doctor hiding in the bushland around Pluim Park whose ancestors have been upset by the local soccer players?

Whatever it is has coach Dale Eggleton bemused.

It is not as if the team is not playing well at home, in fact in all four matches at Pluim Park this season the Coasties have had the majority of play and have made three or four chances to the opposition's one - but they cannot get the ball in the back of the net.

At training the players are scoring from all angles but on match days they just don't perform in the penalty area!

Eggleton said: "We played four pre-season trial matches at Pluim Park against other Super League clubs and had three wins and a draw.

"Maybe we should treat home games from now on as trials," he added tongue in cheek!

However Coasties captain, Peter Preston, doesn't appear to be worried. "The home wins will come," he said.

"It is only halfway through the season and with nine of our remaining fourteen games to be played at Pluim Park we are still confident of a top four position."

If the Coasties don't get a few home wins over the next few weeks, when they have five games in a row at home, they had better spend a couple of training nights witch-doctor hunting!

Incidentally, one of these five home games has been transferred to Graham Park, the new 25,000 all seater stadium in Gosford where the Coasties will take on Bankstown City prior to the Northern Spirit v Canberra Cosmos match.

The Coasties, therefore, will be playing in the first ever soccer match to be played at the new stadium.

Hopefully the witch-doctor hasn't found his way to Gosford, although Inside Soccer will be there.



Inside Soccer's NSL ALL-STARS

MARCH 2000



5: Robbie Trajkovski
Perth Glory



1: Les Pugliacomi
Wolves



5: Glenn Moore
Newcastle Breakers



3: Davie McPherson
Carlton



7: Matty Horsley
Wolves



4: Robbie Slater
Northern Spirit



8: Archie Thompson
Carlton



6: Peter Grierson
Brisbane Strikers



11: Marcus Stergiopoulos
Football Kingz



10: Damian Mori
Adelaide City Force



9: John Buonavoglia
Newcastle Breakers

SQUAD MEMBERS

Tommy Podeljak Syd Utd
Milan Blagojevic Power
Claudio Pelosi Force
Mark Silic Knights
Peter Bennett Power
Andrew Marth Carlton
Mark Babic Marconi
PJ Roberts Canberra
Ivan Vicelich Kingz
Nick Sabljak Force
Mehmed Durakovic Falcons
Jason Petkovic Glory
Pan Keun Kim Marconi

IS selectors explain their choices

The IS selectors announced the following side via an E-mailed press-release, but refused to answer any media questions in person.

LES PUGLIACOMI (Keeper): Since moving from Marconi, via Adelaide City, the big guy has battled to establish himself at Brandon Park. In March he showed that Wollongong has indeed got a quality keeper, vital for any team in the hunt for a title.

GLENN MOORE (Libero): At 23 this defender has a huge future. Composed on the ball, intelligent with his distribution, his solid build and height ensure that very little gets past him.

DAVE MCPHERSON (Central Defender): His record speaks for itself. This 27-time Scottish international has been front and centre of the Carlton revival after a slump that threatened their top six status. His goalscoring has been a valuable bonus.

ROBBIE TRAJKOVSKI (Central Defender): Was just squeezed out of the right wing-back role by Matt Horsley but

deserves his spot after an outstanding month. With other star players coming back, Glory has the likes of 'Traj' to power them home to their first ever Grand Final.

MATT HORSLEY (Right Wingback): Absolutely superb month for the south coast's most recognisable player. His form, together with a rapidly expanded roster at the Nick T-coached Wolves should ensure a top two spot.

ROBBIE SLATER (Midfield): Despite being in his mid-30s this Australian Soccer legend just keeps on going. If it wasn't for his, not insignificant, contributions in March, Spirit would have been well and truly stuffed. Could easily play on into next year on this evidence.

PETER GRIERSON (Midfield): In a side that is now struggling to regain their spot in an increasingly competitive top six, the Englishman has the consistency needed. He can also score his share of goals.

MARCUS STERGIOPoulos (Left wingback): One of the game's more popular players,

'Serg' has shown commitment and endeavor for the Kingz. One of the NSL's best crossers of the ball, Stergiopoulos flourishes when playing regularly for the NSL's brother act, Shane and Wynton Rufer.

ARCHIE THOMPSON (Behind the front two): He has pace, can run at players and, arguably, had his best month in March. On this form, he is still a chance for a return to the Olyroo squad in June.

DAMIAN MORY (Striker): In the month that this player went down in the pantheon of Australian Soccer (not that you would have known given the poor PR his club provided), this classic power striker with the burst of speed also showed that he will be integral in a Force revival that may or may not end up playing at the business end of the year.

JOHN BUONAVOGlia (Striker): Once described as an 'excitement machine' this diminutive goal poacher, 24, has 15 goals at time of writing. The great thing about 'Jockey' is that he is consistent and gives 100% every time.

THE COACHES



Eddie Krcevic
Marconi Stallions
(all-stars coach)



Vlado Vanis
Melbourne Knights
(assistant)

Eddie Krcevic told the sceptics at Christmas that his team would peak at the most dangerous time of the year, that is leading into the final home-and-away charge for the top six, with hopefully the momentum buttressing them from their upstart challengers for the title.

He was right!

If Marconi is the Rolls Royce of Australian Soccer - and few would argue - then Krcevic has the engine purring nicely thanks to some Korean technology by the name of Pan Keun Kim, plus the Australian Player of the Year Brad Maloney, and the return of the combustible Francis Awaritefe in tandem with the explosive talents of Zeljko 'Sean' Babic.

The experience Krcevic can now count on should see his motor cross the finish line in the first six. After that, they are capable of beating just about anyone on their day. The loss to bogey side Spirit at North Sydney was offset in March by a hugely impressive 2-1 away win at Wolves, a 3-1 home victory over Olympic and a 1-1 draw with Newcastle.

For Vlado Vanis, the only blip in a fabulous month was a 4-0 home loss to South. The Big Moose showed his horns by taking off star import Peter Beardsley, resulting in a minor controversy.

That aside, their 1-0 wins, away to Olympic, home to Glory and away to Breakers demonstrated their top six credentials.

The recent losses to Spirit and Wolves in April have however ended their hopes.

NATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE - ROUND THIRTY

ADELAIDE FORCE v NORTHERN SPIRIT

1	Gianluca Ligati
2	Ivan Zelic
3	Alex Tobin
4	Carlo Talladra
5	Damian Mori
6	Carl Veart
7	Nick Sabljak
8	Aurelio Vidmar
9	Nathan Day
10	John Fusco
11	Michael Cartwright
12	Louis Brain
13	Matthew Kemp
14	Angelo Costanzo
15	Bradley Hassell
16	Claudio Pelosi
17	Adrian Cagalj
18	Dong Ki Kim
19	Shane Thompson
20	Jonathan Lihou



2	Robert Enes
3	Matthew Langdon
4	Matthew Bingley
5	Mark Rudan
6	Luke Casserley
7	Robbie Slater
8	Tony Perinich
9	David Seal
10	Nicola Berti
11	Troy Cranney
12	Simon Catanzaro
13	Philip Moss
14	Shane Lyons
15	Anthony Faria
16	Paul Bilokapic
17	Paul Wearne
18	Jess Van Stratten
19	Michael Cunico
20	Paul Henderson
21	Adam Snyder
22	Elvis Olic
23	Ryan Griffiths
24	Jack Sobczyk
25	Abbas Saad
26	Ian Crook
27	Sean Cranney
28	Michael Prentice



Venue: Hindmarsh Stadium - Friday 14 April 2000 8.00PM
 Head to Head: Played 3 Force wins: 2 Spirit wins: 1 Draws 0
 Last Week: Force 1-0 away loss to Wolves.
 Spirit 3-0 home win over Knights.

CANBERRA COSMOS v WOLLONGONG WOLVES

1	Les Pogliacomi
2	George Souris
3	Alvin Ceccoli
4	Robert Stanton
5	David Cervinski
6	Matt Horsley
7	Paul Reid
8	
9	
10	Stuart Young
11	Scott Chipperfield
12	Neil Harlock
13	Noel Spencer
14	Saso Petrovski
15	David Huxley
16	Peter Lahanas
17	Esala Masi
18	Paul O'Grady
19	Paul Dimech
20	Daniel Beltrame
21	Mark Robertson
22	Ben Blake
23	Dino Mennillo



Venue: Bruce Stadium - Friday 14 April 2000 7.30PM
 Head to Head: Played 10 Cosmos wins: 3 Wolves wins: 6 Draws 1
 Last Week: Cosmos 1-1 away draw with Olympic.
 Wolves 1-0 home win over Force.

PARRAMATTA POWER v SYDNEY UNITED

1	Andrew Crews
2	David Barrett
3	Michael Santalab
4	Steve Eagleton
5	Richard Plesa
6	Joe Vrkic
7	Jacob Burns
8	Walter Ardore
9	Mile Sterjovski
10	Joel Griffiths
11	Steve Berry
12	Stephen Laybutt
13	Milan Blagojevic
14	John Angelucci
15	Danny Townsend
16	Mark Byrnes
17	Danny Kukucka
18	Lachlan Campbell
19	Matt Thompson
20	Barney Smith
21	Ahmid Elrich
22	John Gibson
23	Peter Bennett
24	
25	
26	
27	
28	
29	
30	Mike Gibson



1	John Crawley
2	Ray Younis
3	Mark Racker
4	Vellimir Kupresak
5	Eddie Bosnar
6	Vince Savocca
7	Mirko Jurilj
8	Nahuel Arrarte
9	Mario Jermen
10	Ante Moric
11	Tom Pondejnik
12	Tom Maric
13	Matthew Zec
14	Kain Rastall
15	Aytec Genc
16	Joe Moric
17	Nick Bolevski
18	Steve Bozinovski
19	Greg Saric
20	Steve Tolios
21	Zvonko Usijerka
22	Colin Luff
23	Terry Palapanis
24	Andy Rakic
25	Ante Deur
26	Fernando Pellegrino
27	Ante Deur
28	Brett Hughes



Venue: Parramatta Stadium - Friday 14 April 2000 7.30PM
 Head to Head: Played 3 Power wins: 1 United wins: 1 Draws 1
 Last Week: Power v Newcastle - postponed.
 United 1-2 home loss to Carlton.

MARCONI STALLIONS v GIPPSLAND FALCONS

1	Michael Turnbull
2	Chad Gibson
3	Mark Babic
4	
5	Dominic Longo
6	Pan-Keum Kim
7	Christian Care
8	Darren McDonald
9	Zeljko Babic
10	Brad Maloney
11	Mike Smith
12	
13	Danny Invincible
14	Buddy Farah
15	Pierluigi di Gia
16	Alex Duric
17	Francis Awaritefe
18	Harry Karl
19	Brendan Renaud
20	David Aceski
21	Paolo Marchesini
22	Kris Trajanovski
23	Vlado Zoric
24	Josaya Junior Sauturaga
25	Daniel Severino



1	Bojo Jevdjovic
2	Dean Fak
3	Manny Gotis
4	Mehmed Durakovic
5	Jeff Hopkins
6	Brian MacNichol
7	Andy Vargas
8	Clayton Bell
9	Robbie Puca
10	Sandy Robertson
11	John Hutchinson
12	Peter Kakos
13	Adrian Savage
14	Doug Marcina
15	Jonathon Buhugiar
16	Juan Nilo
17	Michael Katz
18	Igor Mandic
19	Simon Miotto
20	Ben Cassar



Venue: Marconi Stadium - Sunday 16 April 2000 6.00PM
 Head to Head: Played 16 Stallions wins: 10 Falcons wins: 1 Draws 5
 Last week: Stallions 3-1 away loss to Kingz.
 Falcons 0-1 home loss to Strikers.

PERTH GLORY v NEWCASTLE BREAKERS

1	Tom Tomich
2	Robert Trajkovski
3	Jamie Harnwell
4	Aurello
5	Vinko Buljubasic
6	Gareth Naven
7	Scott Miller
8	Troy Halpin
9	Alistair Edwards
10	Bobby Despotoski
11	Kasey Wehrman
12	Peter Buljan
13	Jamos Afkos
14	Dion Valle
15	Edgar Junior
16	
17	Hamilton Thorp
18	John Carbone
19	Tony Franken
20	Ivan Ergic
21	Ljubo Milicevic
22	Jason Petkovic
23	Aaron Cole



Venue: Perth Oval - Sunday 16 April 2000 3.00PM
 Head to Head: Played 7 Glory wins: 2 Breakers wins: 5 Draws 0
 Last week: Glory 1-2 away win over South Melbourne.
 Breakers v Power - postponed.



FRIDAY 14 APRIL 7.30

C7 SPORT CHANNEL 13

CARLTON V SOUTH MELBOURNE



CARLTON
 1 Dean Anastasiadis
 2 Dave McPherson
 3 Craig Deans
 4 Simon Colosimo
 5 Sean Douglas
 6 Andrew Marth
 7 Stuart Slater
 8 Mark Atkinson
 9 Alex Moreira
 10 Lubo Lapsansky
 11 Archie Thompson (below)
 12 Mike Cohroy
 13 Steve Martin
 14 John Markovski
 15 Con Anthopoulos
 16 David Terminello
 17 Joe Tricarico
 18
 19
 20 Andrew Packer
 21 Angelo Motsopoulos
 22 Colin Azzopardi
 23 Joshua Kennedy
 24 Daniel Vassilevski
 25 Steve Horvat
 26

SOUTH MELBOURNE
 1 Milan Udvaracz
 2 Steve Iosifidis
 3 Fausto de Amicis
 4 Nick Orlic
 5 Con Blatsis
 6 David Clarkson
 7 Steve Panopoulos
 8 Vaughan Coveny
 9 Paul Trimbold
 10 Michael Curcija
 11 John Anastasiadis
 12 Richie Alagich
 13 Adrian Cuzzupe
 14 Anthony Magnacca
 15 Goran Lozanovski
 16
 17 Jim Tsekiris
 18 Robert Liparoti
 19 Tasos Psonis
 20 Chris Jones
 21 Rade Culbirk
 22 Mustafa Mustafa
 23 Chris Roche
 24 Andy Vlahos



Venue: Olympic Park
Friday 14 April 7.30PM
Head-to-Head: 9
Carlton: 2
South: 6
Draws: 1

Last Week: Carlton 1-2 away win over Sydney United.
 South 1-2 home loss to Perth Glory.

SUNDAY 16 APRIL 7.30

C7 SPORT CHANNEL 12

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS V FOOTBALL KINGZ



KNIGHTS

1
 2 Joey Rayher
 3 Ivan Jolic
 4 Ante Kovacevic
 5 Jason Vukadin (below)
 6 John Didulica
 7 Mark Silic
 8 Dragi Nastevski
 9 Ivan Kelic
 10 Paul Urlović
 11 Zoltan Zold
 12 Murtala Toyin Abbas
 13 Lance Plunkett
 14 Paul Magdic
 15 Ransford Banini
 16 Alex Kiratzoglou
 17 Brandon Vassalo
 18 Rody Vargas
 19 Zlatko Magilic
 20 Martin John
 21 Zeljko Susa
 22 Slavko Rados
 23 Michael Reda
 24 Hrvoje Matkovic
 25 Adrian Cervinski
 26 Marko Prskalo
 30 Lupce Acevski

KINGZ

1
 2 Che Bunce
 3 Riki Van Steeden
 4 Jon Lammers
 5 Jonathon Perry
 6 Marcus Stergiopoulos
 7 Wynton Rufer
 8 Chris Jackson
 9 Fred de Jong
 10 Jeff Campbell
 11 Robbie Middleby
 12 Harry Ngata
 13 Levent Osman
 14 Batrum Suri
 15 Ivan Vcelich
 16 Lee Jones
 17 Mark Elrick
 18 Stuart Riddle
 19 Leigh Kenyon
 20 Jason Batty
 21 David Moya
 22 Aaron Silva
 23 Simon Eaddy
 24 Daniel Duke
 25 Aaron Lines
 32 Noah Hickey



Venue: Knights Stadium
Sunday 16 April 3.00PM
Head to Head: 1
Knights: 0
Kingz: 0
Draws: 1

Last Week: Knights 3-0 away loss to Spirit.
 Kingz 3-1 home win over Stallions.



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